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**THE ALLENS**



CO. ROUTLEDGE & SONS, THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE,



# THE ALLENS:

*A Tale of the Great Kanaboha Valley.*



LONDON :  
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,  
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.



# THE ALLENS:

## A TALE OF THE GREAT KANAWHA VALLEY

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### CHAPTER I

#### NEW HOPE.

THE sharp crack of a rifle broke upon the air, and the body of a large buck hung for a moment suspended in mid air, then came rolling down the steep to the banks of the river, where it rushed through the gorge. The Great Kanawha was running low in its channel, but its clear, fast-whirling waters still hurried headlong downward toward the far Ohio, and their music filled with a smothered moan the aisles of the great forest along its border.

By the banks of the stream stood a brother and sister, gazing into the dizzy tide, when the stricken deer came rolling, crashing down the mountain steep, reposing at length almost at their feet.

"Halloo, there! Look out for the beast, I say, you stranger with the gal. He'll be makin' at you ef he ben't dead. Look skeery, I say!" came a strong, clear voice from the heights above. Even as he spoke, the animal, stunned but not killed, slowly arose to its feet, and, seeing the two confronting it, showed evident signs of fight.

"Down, Mattie! Over the bluff there on to that shelf!" cried the young man, seeing the danger of an assault from the infuriated deer.

With a quickness quite surprising, the girl leaped over the bank, and was soon standing on a projecting rock below, covered by the rocks above and around from danger.

The movement had not been a moment too quick, for the deer, arising to its haunches, sat for but a moment when it

made a desperate lunge at the young man. With great agility he dodged the creature, whose branching antlers just passed his body as he leaped aside to avoid the blow that would have sent him reeling into the chasm below. Again the animal came to the charge, and again the quick-footed but unarmed man evaded the blow. How long this would have continued we can not say; but the deer had another antagonist at hand worthy of his mettle. The hunter, dropping rapidly down the mountain side, came up at the critical moment. His rifle having no charge in it was of no use, and, flinging it aside, he drew his long hunting-knife from its sheath and confronted the deer. The beast perceived his danger, and, for a moment, seemed to hesitate in the attack.

"Come on, old critter! Don't be blinkin' there ef you've got any grit in you. I'll give you a taste of barbecue without roastin', you tearin' old—"

The sentence was not finished, for the deer made a spirited dash at the bold fellow, and soon they were locked in a hand and horn tussle. With the quickness of lightning the hunter struck his well-aimed blow, and the noble buck settled down upon its haunches, then toppled over, and, with a pitiful bleat, straightened out its limbs in death.

"There now, old fellow, don't shed them tears, 'cause I don't like to see 'em; and that bleat—ding my skin ef it don't go through me like a woman's cry! There, there, that'll end it, poor old fellow," said the hunter, as he gave the animal two blows with the knife to end its struggles.

The young man looked on with intense interest at the whole proceeding, scarcely remembering the frightened girl who crouched close to the rocks over the bank.

"Where's the gal, young man?" said the hunter, with some apparent concern.

"Oh, safe over the bank. Here, Mattie, all's right! Give me your hand, my brave sister!"

The girl looked up over the rocks to see her brother, and, taking his extended hand, now stood upon the bank again.

"What! my old friend of the Springs?" said she, as she held out her hand to the hunter.

"As sure as shootin', Miss," was the answer, as the hunter doffed his cap and stood smiling before the girl. "An' how come you here?" he added, after a moment's pause. "I kinder thought as how *you* was in for't. Ha! ha! I guess somethin's in the wind!"

"Oh no, my good friend; nothing is wrong. I am here as a settler, you know."

"No! Whar do you live?"

"Down at New Hope. My father has come into possession of estates round about here, and we shall live here. This is my brother Harry."

"Gin us your fist, my boy. Here's Ben Bramble's compliments. Your sister is an old acquaintance o' mine—that is, you see, I was sick last summer at the Springs, and she used to be very kind to me. It was better'n a doctor, I tell ye, to have her talk to me, and I shall never forget Miss Allen!" This was said with such honesty, and the hunter looked so truly delighted, that Harry Allen at once opened his heart to the fellow. They were friends from the subtle free-masonry of confidence at first sight.

The animal lay at Ben's feet bathed in its blood. The sight of blood to Mattie's sensitive organization was sickening, and ere she was aware of it, a faintness stole over her; her face became hueless; and she would have dropped to the earth had not Ben's quick eye detected all, and his strong arm caught her. Lifting her like a babe, he bore her to the cool shade of an oak, seating her against the tree. Then he drew from his pouch a bottle of whisky, with which he bathed her temples and moistened her lips. She recovered her consciousness in a few moments to find Harry bending over her in laughter.

"Poor girl! Worthy daughter of the wilderness! Mistress of the valley!" he spoke tantalizingly.

Mattie arose and started for the horses, which were hitched not far away.

"Now, look here, young man, I say none of *that*. I've felt squeamish at sight of blood, and I thinks it's woman's right to be a little more squeamish than us. Jist do you say nothing about it."

Ben was too earnest for Harry to gainsay the reproof.



Following Mattie, he found her, a little flushed with anger, ready to mount her horse. Harry kissed her into a smile. They were soon on their horses, when Ben came up to "see that all was on the square." Mattie's smile reassured him, and, exacting a promise from the hunter that he would come over to "the place," the brother and sister drew rein for a gallop over the hills.

Harry and Mattie were the only children of Edward Allen—a gentleman of education and refined habits, who had lately removed from Eastern Virginia to the Karawha valley. Having lost the bulk of his fortune by the most unexpected and unfortunate failure of an extensive business house, he resolved to remove to the valley, and, upon the New Hope estate—a part of the military lands patrimony from his good old patriot father—there to spend his days in quiet, and to escape the annoyance and humiliation of a society whose ostentatious style of living he could no longer support.

Starting for the West in the summer of 1798, he tarried, after crossing the mountains, at the White Sulphur Springs, to recruit his impaired health. There they were joined by friends, and, shall we say also, by one who sought to become dearer than friend? That early day found "the Springs" a favorite resort for the invalid and pleasure-seekers; and the estates adjoining found their hospitality sometimes severely tasked to entertain those who sought the quiet and health of that romantic spot.

Many was the sad parting when the day at length came for the Allens to push on to their forest-home, and for their friends, old and young, to return to the East. Saddest of all was the parting between Mattie and her lover, Victor Carington—one whom her pure soul worshiped with all the devotion of her warm nature. The lover wended his way solemnly and sadly to the East, while the loved bent her way with much heaviness of heart to the West.

But Harry—he was gay and gladsome as a bird. At the Springs, if he had lost old friends, he had also found new. There was Squire Templeman, whom Mr. Allen found to be one of the proprietors nearest to his own Kanawha estate, and who would, therefore, be his neighbor. A warm friendship soon sprung up between the two gentlemen; and, between

Helen Templeman and Harry—why, there flew stray glances, pretty phrases, little attentions, which were significant of every thing but sadness at the present or sorrow for the future. Helen—the gay, dashing, stirring girl of the hills and woods—she quite filled the soul of Harry with song and excitement if not with peace.

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## CHAPTER II.

BEN BRAMBLE.

"WHY, he's a pretty fellow," said Harry to his sister, as they sat by the fire on a cold evening in December, tossing to her a letter which he had been reading: "he's a pretty fellow to be talking to us of the Mersey and Thames, and the Avon of Plinlimmon, and the Vale of Llangollen, and the Highlands and lakes of Scotland. He has seen the Powhatan and the Potomac, the peaks of Otter, Harper's Ferry, and the Warm Spring Mountain."

"Ah, brother," replied Mattie, eagerly seizing the letter, "Victor has never descended yet the cliffs of New River; has never stood upon the brink of the Hawk's Nest, or looked down upon the valley of the Great Kanawha from the rock-raised parapets above the falls. He has never seen Cotton Hill in October."

"Well, I pity the boy," said the brother, "and I fear he will return from Europe a most insufferable coxcomb, Mattie."

"If he does," said she, "which I don't believe he ever will, still he will have most traveled young gentlemen to keep him in countenance, and some, too, who have never traveled very far."

"I don't know who the gentleman mought be that you ar' talkin' on, Master Harry," said Ben Bramble, who at that moment looked up from the mysteries of a Dutch puzzling iron, while Mattie was deeply engaged in reading the letter: "I don't know nothin' of him; but if he's never see'd Cotton Hill in the fall of the year, no matter whar he's traveled, he's got

something to see yit. It's one of the beauties of God's own makin'—round, and smooth, and plump as a young gal when she's jest a woman like ; them grape-vines a curlin' round the heads of the high trees on the top, like Miss Mattie's hair when it falls down on her shoulders ; and then the redbirds, and the dogwoods, and the sassafras, and the sugar-trees, with thar leaves of all colors a-playin' in the wind and a-shining in the sun—thar's nar a calico gown that I ever see'd yit to be compared to it."

Mattie, who had finished reading the letter, looked at Ben, and asked him :

"What's that you said about my hair ?"

"Only," said Ben, "that it puts me in mind of the grape-vines all covered with green leaves, that hang curlin' down from the tops of the trees on Cotton Hill."

"That's the most poetical compliment, papa," said Mattie, to her father, "that ever was paid to me."

"True, my dear," replied he, "'*poeta nascitur.*'"

A tap was heard at the door. Mr. Allen opened it, saying to a man whose figure the light of the candles disclosed, "Walk in, sir."

The person who entered was a well-set man of middle size, with a blanket overcoat and broad-brimmed white hat on, both of which had seen some service. There was nothing remarkable in his face or its expression, both of which would by most persons be thought good-looking, except a restless moving of his eyes, which rested not a moment on any one object, and seemed never, except by furtive glances, to meet the eyes of other persons. A slight tinge of red on his nose, if not caused by the sharp, chilling air through which he had just ridden, indicated the recent commencement rather than the long-continued habit of intemperance. On those who are not close observers of men, the wandering expression of his eyes would have impressed the idea that he was a diffident, if not a timid man ; but their continual glancing was like that of a wild animal seeking its prey, or caught and confined, looking for some hole through which to escape. His first words, however, would have dissipated all ideas of his diffidence or timidity, if such had been produced.

"My name is Isaac Forster," said he. "It's on my letter

of introduction : but that's in my saddlebags, Mr. Allen, with other papers of business." Saying this, he drew a chair close to the fire, and spreading his legs and hands to receive its genial warmth, and looking all round the room, continued : "It's too late for business to-night, Mr. Allen ; to-morrow, sir, will be time enough for that."

"If you have business with me, sir," said Mr. Allen, returning from the door, "and such is your pleasure, we will attend to it in the morning, Mr. Forster. A sharp evening, sir, is this for the beginning of December."

"Pretty sharp," said Forster ; "but I never mind the weather. I don't regulate that. It's not my business."

Harry, in an undertone, remarked to his sister :

"That man has lived all his life in taverns. He thinks he's in one now."

Mattie, in turning her head toward her brother, caught the eye of Ben Bramble, who was beckoning to her from an adjoining room, into which he had passed unobserved as Isaac Forster entered the front door. Ben Bramble, since meeting with Harry and his sister at the falls, had been frequently at New Hope, for such was the name which Mr. Allen's children had given to his place of residence on the Kanawha. He had evidently become much attached to the family, and felt at home in their house.

Mattie glided out of the sitting-room. Mr. Allen did not perceive that Ben had left it. Turning to a gray-headed servant who had brought Mr. Forster's saddlebags into the room, he said to him : "Thomas, have this gentleman's horse taken to the stable."

"Ay, ay, do, Tommy," added Forster ; "feed him well, and a little currying and rubbing won't hurt him, you know, my boy."

As the servant retired, with a somewhat contemptuous look at his master's guest, Mattie returned, and approaching her father, said something to him in a low tone, on which Mr. Allen left the room, apologizing to Forster for a few moments' absence.

"Tell your daddy to come here," Ben had said to Mattie, when she obeyed his signal.

We are left to conjecture what communications Ben Bramble

made to Mr. Allen, in their private interview. Ben did not return to the sitting-room. We incline to think that he did not wish Forster, whose quick eye he had escaped, to know of his presence that evening at New Hope.

Ben strode away in the dark, cold night with the bold and free step of an American mountaineer. His rifle was in his hand, his knife at his side, and his dogs, Captain Rover and Young Kate, followed his footsteps. The lock of his gun was covered by a kind of leather mask, which effectually kept the lock dry, and protected the powder in the pan from dew or rain. Percussion locks and caps were not then in use; and even if they had been, so steady was his sinewy arm and so certain his aim, that he needed not the assistance which these recent inventions of chemical and mechanical science have afforded to less experts with fire-arms.

Ben's path followed the course of the river up to the foot of the falls, where his light canoe was moored beneath the giant trunk of a sycamore which stood upon the brink of the river, and to which it was fastened by a chain and padlock.

In a few moments his light bark shot across the current of the river, and passing up a ravine along the course of a mountain streamlet which winds around the western base of Jenkins' Mountain (Cotton Hill), Ben soon reached his humble cabin, to forget in sweet repose both friends and enemies.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE AGENT.

ISAAC FORSTER was a widower, without children, about forty years of age, in search of a wife, more land and more money than the ample amount of both which he already possessed. A very common character, this; yet he was no common man. He had heard of the arrival and settlement of Mr. Allen on the Kanawha, quite near his own residence; that he had a very pretty daughter, and a son, who would be his only heirs; and although Mr. Allen was a broken merchant

Isaac had an impression, from some facts known to himself, that the wreck of this gentleman's fortune might be more valuable than a gold-freighted Acapulco ship. The son of Mr. Allen, he had heard, was in delicate health. But this was all a mistake. Isaac thought the change of climate from the eastern to the western side of the mountains might render Miss Allen her father's only heir, or some accident might occur to cause that event—such as exposure at pleasure-parties, the upsetting of a boat above the falls, the accidental going off of a rifle, or some poisonous herb gathered through mistake for a salad to be served up to him on his return, after the usual dinner-hour, from some hunting or fishing excursion.

Isaac was an excellent accountant, and thought he understood the calculation of probabilities and chances. He had removed from Eastern Virginia some years ago, and since his settlement in the West, had acted as land-agent, land-jobber, surveyor, and tax-payer for many gentlemen in Virginia and Maryland as well as for himself. He was, perhaps, the best penman in the United States; he could write and imitate every sort of chirography, and very few persons could distinguish their own handwriting from Isaac's imitation. He had been brought up in a clerk's office, and thought himself a lawyer, as many other persons do from a mere acquaintance with the forms of law.

He was the land-agent of more persons than any other man living west of the mountains. He had a power of attorney from extensive landholders as their agent to pay taxes, form settlements, and sell very extensive tracts of land in Western Virginia, Kentucky and the Western Territory.

On his removal to the West, Isaac had carried with him several thousand dollars. By the judicious use of this sum, and by active industry, he had become a great man in the West in the estimation of many others as well as in his own. This was apparent in his free and easy manners everywhere. So constantly was he traveling on business, that it was impossible to tell where he might be found, except when he had made an appointment; *then* and *there* you would surely find him in time at the place, in spite of storm, tempest, fire or water. He took pride in this thing, and found it productive of reputation and money. At other times, when everybody

thought Isaac was at home, he was at Louisville, Pittsburg, New York, New Orleans, or where nobody knew. The natives at first stared and wondered, but they got used to it, and thought no more of his absence or of the distance he might be from home than if he had been a comet.

It was during one of these trips from home that Mr. Allen arrived with his family on the Kanawha; and on Isaac's return to his own house, he found the following letter on his table, which had been left during his absence:

*"To Mr. Isaac Forster, below Lewisburg, on the Great Kanawha.*

*"ALEXANDRIA, August 20th, '98.*

"D'R ZACK—Blown sky-high, by jimminy! Smith and Bird, Buchanan and Alexander, broke all to smash. Lands all, every acre of them, transferred to Ned Allen, (don't believe you know him—that's strange!) by *bona fide* deeds recorded, to indemnify him for some sixty thousand dollars which the fool paid as their endorser. Thinks himself a ruined man—has moved to Kanawha. This comes in haste before him, to give you an item to keep dark and lay low. Has a son—devilish keen fellow, they say; you must take care of him—and a daughter. 'Twould be well to marry her, friend Isaac; easy way to settle things, specially if Allen won't renew your lease and power of attorney. Before he smells a rat, you must be wide awake. But I needn't advise you, who can manage, I guess, a dozen of Ned Allens. Hope this will come to hand in time to prevent his falling into worse hands. Son Sam will be out next summer, or early in the fall, with the papers, etc., etc., you will want in other cases. He knows nothing about them or any of *our business transactions*, and ought not. He's too thoughtless a chap. *Tin won't do here. Look out. That's the time of day. The western counties and the district of Kentuck is the hunting-ground. Horses will do here.*

Yours in the bonds,

"JONES CARTER.

"P. S. Letter of introduction enclosed.

J. C."

Some parts of this letter are comprehensible enough; others are obscure and dark. On its reception (much later than the writer intended, in consequence of Mr. Forster's absence,) and after the arrival of Mr. Allen at his new home, Isaac set off instantly for the house of that gentleman, and arrived there,

as we have seen, on a cold evening in December. The importance he attached to the contents of this letter may be inferred from the fact that, although he had ridden nearly fifty miles during the day, yet in ten minutes after reading the letter, notwithstanding he was weary and hungry, and it was cold and dark, he was on the road to Mr. Allen's.

The lands leased to Isaac Forster, now the property of Mr. Allen, were not London surveys, at least the greater part of them were not, as the merchants supposed when they leased them to Isaac. Mr. Allen did not know even of the existence of these lands, much less of any value they might possess, when he unexpectedly received the deeds for them, together with the mournful news of the utter failure of the merchants for whom he had paid so much money. Their really great value was known only to Isaac and his confidential allies, and to persons who thought *him* their owner. When Isaac received his last lease, and was paying annually a forty-dollar horse and the taxes as *rent* for them, they were worth at least half a million of dollars. And he was receiving from the "squatters that he had turned into tenants" a handsome revenue in money, horses, grain, skins, etc. Besides this, he was selling odd ends and slips, and offsets, the surplusage of large tracts which he had re-surveyed; for then old surveys were very loosely made, the corners being on this "*hill side*," on "*a prong of the branch*," "*seven hundred poles lower down*," etc., containing often hundreds of acres more than were called for in the patent. Nobody knew how much Isaac was realizing from them. Mr. Allen never dreamed that they could be worth a fiftieth part of the sixty thousand dollars which he had lost by those who had conveyed them to him. In their letters covering the conveyances, and informing him that the original patents, deeds, and other papers were in the hands of their agent in the West, not even the name of the agent was mentioned by the merchants. They took it for granted, we suppose, that everybody knew that honest Isaac Forster was the man.

Parts of many tracts sold by Forster, and not paid for, were reconveyed to Isaac himself on his assumption of the payments of the very small sums for which they had been sold by him as agent. Men of business will know that the power of



attorney to Forster was superseded and virtually revoked by the transfer of the lands to Mr. Allen. In the course of the next year Isaac's lease itself would expire. He therefore knew that no time was to be lost in coming to some understanding, and in making some comfortable arrangement with Mr. Allen, the present owner of the lands. Our readers are now acquainted with the purpose of his visit to New Hope.

After breakfast at New Hope, to which all did ample justice except Mr. Allen, whose ill-health restricted him to a modest diet, he and Forster retired to the sitting-room, when the latter asked for his saddlebags, and, taking out a bundle of papers, drew forth and presented to Mr. Allen a letter of introduction. After reading the letter, Mr. Allen said :

"I owe you an apology, Mr. Forster, for not recognizing you last evening as the late attorney and tenant of my friends who have conveyed me their Western lands. But no name was mentioned in their letter, from the presumption on their part, I suppose, that I had the pleasure of knowing you personally."

"No doubt," replied Isaac, "as I am pretty well known there and here. But that's of no consequence now, sir, as I hope we shall soon be better acquainted, Mr. Allen. Those under whom you claim and hold have had my services many years for little or nothing, and the lands for which I have been paying to them a valuable horse and the taxes yearly are London surveys, as perhaps you know."

"I have been informed that such is their character, or, at least, that such was the impression of their former owners. I know nothing of them myself; I have very lately, as you are no doubt informed, Mr. Forster, received deeds for them. But a regard for my interests will induce me to take measures to ascertain their present and prospective value so soon as my health will permit. Your lease, I understand, expires in October next, and the rent for the present year is to be paid to myself."

"Unless," said Forster, "there is some provision to the contrary."

"There is none," replied Mr. Allen; "and as it is well for gentlemen, in all business matters, to understand each other perfectly, you will excuse me for saying there was some slight

inaccuracy in your designation of the nature of my title to those lands. I do not hold them *under* Smith and Birl, Buchanan and Alexander, but *from* them. The conveyance to me is absolute, unconditional, and in fee-simple, for and in consideration of sixty thousand dollars which I have actually paid for them."

"Sixty thousand dollars!" said Forster; "that is too bad. You'll never, I fear, sir, see the hundredth part of that sum for them. But, we must make the best of it, sir. I might, as your agent, knowing the lands and the people in this country, lighten your loss some little, to be sure. With longer time, and a renewal of my lease for five, or rather, ten years, something might be done by myself; but, under ordinary management, they will yield nothing for many years, if ever."

"Well," said Mr. Allen, "I must make the best of it, as you say, Forster. You are aware, sir, that the power of attorney to you was rendered null and void by the transfer of the lands to me, and that you are bound in law to make not only a return of all the papers, and a report of all transactions by yourself as attorney, but, as my tenant now, attorney to me, the present landlord."

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Allen; all that the law requires, in good time, sir. But I have called at this time, Mr. Allen, merely to give you an opportunity to renew the power of attorney, which your own interest requires; and it is only to promote the welfare of an old Virginian that I would now again undertake so troublesome and unprofitable an agency. I thought, too, that you might wish me to renew my lease, if we can agree on the terms. They were high, I know, and the whole business attended with more labor than profit; but as it is in the line of my business, Mr. Allen, and keeps me moving about, I suppose I must consent to undertake both. There are few persons, sir, in the West, able to attend to their own affairs, as you, I hope, will soon be, for whom I would do so much. We must help one another, when our friends need it, and are in difficulties, out of which we only can see a chance of drawing them. It is our duty to use our knowledge and experience, in matters in which we are better versed than our friends, for their benefit and advantage."

"True—very true," said Allen ; "as I am in the habit, Mr. Forster, of transacting all matters of business in writing, will you do me the favor to make your proposals in that form? There are pens, ink, and paper on the table near you," he added.

Isaac's face lighted up, and his gray eyes twinkled with pleasure as he turned his chair round to the table. Nothing gratified him more than to display his penmanship. It flattered his vanity in a point on which he piqued himself. The subject, too—he imagined himself on the point of accomplishing at once his cherished designs, and of doing the thing, too, at the request of another. The bird, thought he, has fluttered up to the very mouth of the charmer ; I have only to open it and in he will pop. In the most beautiful, clerk-like hand, Isaac dashed off and presented to Mr. Allen the following proposals :

"I propose to receive a full power of attorney from Edward Allen, Esq., of Kanawha county, Virginia, to transact all business in relation to the lands to him conveyed by Smith and Bird, Buchanan and Alexander, for the consideration of five per cent. on all sales, transfers, rents, and other definitive arrangements of the same, or any part or parts thereof, effected by me as his agent. And I further propose to renew my lease of the same lands, on the terms of the former lease, for the term of —— years after the 15th of October next, when my present term, derived from the former owners, will expire. All sales or transfers made by me to take effect, as to actual possession, on the expiration of the said —— years. In witness whereof, I have this day, the first of December, 1798, at the house of the said Edward Allen, Esq., on the Kanawha River, set my hand and affixed my seal.

"ISAAC FORSTER." [SEAL.]

"For how many years shall I fill up the term?" said Isaac, raising the paper from the table, and glancing at Mr. Allen.

"It matters not," said Mr. Allen ; "I think you proposed *ten* or *twenty*."

"Very well," said Isaac, rapidly replacing the paper on the table, and inserting *twenty* in the blank which he had left ; and handing the paper to Mr. Allen, he added, "you will find

it all right, sir, and in due form, and quite satisfactory, I hope."

Mr. Allen took the paper, read it over carefully, folded it up, and put it into his pocket, remarking to Forster that the proposals were very distinct and explicit; that he would give them all due consideration, and would give an answer, either accepting or rejecting them, on the 15th of October, when his lease would expire.

Isaac was thunderstruck. Here he was, in the first sitting, the first game for an enormous stake, in check to the knight of whom Jones Carter had written to him he could manage a dozen. And, besides, his adversary—for such henceforth he considered Mr. Allen—had gained two most important points on the board: an acknowledgment of notice of the conveyance of the lands to Mr. Allen, and the consequent annulment of the power of attorney after that date, and a recognition in writing of the day on which the lease would terminate. "This comes of eager and unguarded fishing in water before we know its depth." Isaac, however, hoped that these things might not be observed; they were surely not artfully drawn out. Mr. Allen had made no suggestion. He might only be a slow man, without being astute or deliberate, much less cautious or cunning. His having paid sixty thousand dollars as security for other people forbade all such ideas. He must wait on him—watch him closely—sound him to the bottom, and take his measures according to circumstances.

"Well, sir," said he, "your will must be my pleasure in this matter. But delays are dangerous (Isaac felt the full force of this truism), and you may find it so, Mr. Allen. I thought that your true interests were so plain in providing at present for their advancement, that the business might have been done, as it ought to be, sir, in half an hour—*to-day* as well (certainly better) than at any future time."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Allen. "But my health is not good, and therefore I have fixed a day for my answer somewhat distant, that if, in the spring, I should recover my wonted strength, I may improve it by riding. In that case, I hope to see some, at least, of the London surveys, and judge for myself of their value."

"Nothing but his death or his daughter, then," thought

Isaac Forster, "can carry me through. He must die or I must marry before November next. His daughter *is* a fine-looking girl; rather too fond of dress, I perceive, and high-minded—the daughters of these aristocrats are all so. Let *me* get her, though, and *I'll* manage all that."

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE AGENT FISHES FOR A WIFE.

THE object of his thoughts was just entering the room as these ideas passed through his mind.

"This is my daughter Mattie, Mr. Forster," said Mr. Allen, formally introducing her.

"I hope you are pleased, Miss, with the Western country," said Isaac, addressing the young lady.

"Quite so, sir, especially with the scenery," she replied, with that grace and quiet dignity of manner which then marked the demeanor of well-bred Virginia ladies.

"You must be very domestic, I think, for I have never seen you out; I should not have forgotten it, I am very sure."

"I have had but little time as yet, sir, to form acquaintances, and there are few public places in the country at which the presence of ladies is expected except those of public worship, and they are not numerous, I believe, in this neighborhood."

"I am sorry to say that is true. To what denomination, may I ask, Miss Allen, do you belong?"

"My father is an Episcopalian, sir, and I have seen no reason to abandon the church to which he is attached."

"That I think is right, Miss. Those who think their fathers right, are apt, when they marry, to think their husbands right—dutiful daughters make dutiful wives."

"I had not viewed church-membership in that light," said Mattie, smiling.

"I presume not," said Forster; "but you may, though, for

young ladies are apt to put one in mind of a church, you know, if they never think of it themselves."

"Oh, I don't pretend *never* to think of that to which you allude."

"If you did," said her father, "neither Mr. Forster nor any other gentleman would believe you."

Forster looked at his watch—a very showy one—requested his horse to be brought out, took his leave and departed.

"Well, Tom, my boy," said he, to the smiling old servant, who handed him the bridle, and held the stirrup for him to mount his horse, "my horse looks well this morning; I am sorry I haven't a fourpence for you. That young mistress of yours is a handsome girl, Tommy—make an elegant wife, eh? Good-by." And he rode away as if already possessed of his game—very self-satisfied and happy.

"Sorry he ain't got a fourpence for me," said Uncle Tom, looking at Forster, as he rode away. "He's sorry he ain't got more for hisself. What he think I want wid fourpence from sich as he? He ain't no gentleman. If you wus to run all the raal gentlemen in Ole Virginny through a wheat-fan, you couldn't shake out nor blow out sich tail cends as dat man—ha! ha! hah! My missus a han'some gal! Make an illegant wife! Lor' bless my soul! ha! ha! hah! I don't know what's gwine to happen when *sich* trash as *he* takes her name in *his* mouf! 'Taint fitten for a spit-box for *her*. I 'clar, she shouldn't sile her shoes by walkin' on him ober a mud-hole. No, sah! Illegant wife! What *he* gwine do wid illegant wife—ha! ha! hah! He mighty illegant he-self, I s'pose, ain't he? The 'oman what does his washin' will have nasty wuck if what's in him sweats out. Wife! I 'clar, he must be a born fool to think of sich a thing. Lord a massa! what is dis world cummin to!"

The old fellow was solemnly impressed with the latter thought, and moved off toward the stable, apparently in a serious mood.

The Kanawha valley, from the falls to the mouth of the river, ninety miles distant, forms an acute delta, with its base on the Ohio. There is no land in America of greater fertility; and in so narrow a valley, shut in by mountains and traversed by so large a river, the climate is more equable and

milder than on extensive plains in the same latitude. The peach, pear and apple, the plum and the grape, are rarely killed by variations in the temperature; and they all mature their fruit in great perfection. The fields of grain and grass exhibit the most luxuriant crops. Indeed, nothing can surpass, in the eyes of an American agriculturist, the deep-green, cloud-like appearance of a field of Indian corn in the Kanawha bottom, just before it throws out its feathery tassels and silken shoots.

Through this valley, the day after Forster's visit to New Hope, Mr. Allen's carriage was rattling. Uncle Tom was driving Miss Mattie and her brother from a meeting-house, whither they had been to hear the gospel preached. In passing over one of the pole bridges, common in those days in the valley, it suddenly gave way, and the carriage, horses and driver were precipitated into the water below. Most fortunately, the sleeper or joint on the lower side remained unbroken. The cross-poles, with the carriage, slid down, and in overturning, the carriage rested against them. A man on horseback, riding just behind the carriage, saw the accident, and the imminent danger to those within it. He leaped from his horse, plunged into the water, tore open the door on the upper side, seized the lady by her cloak, and dragged her out on the bank.

Harry Allen was striving to break through the top of the carriage, believing that the door could not be opened in time to save his sister; but now, seeing her in safety on the bank, leaped out, and turned to see what had become of the old negro. Thrown off the seat into the water, and before he rose to the top, he had been carried down between the loose, broken poles below the bridge. He swam to the nearest bank, and seeing his young master and mistress safe on the shore, ran up the bank, pulled out his knife, and plunged in again to cut the traces off the horses. But it was too late. Before he could accomplish his purpose, both horses were drowned.

It was but a short distance to Mr. Allen's house. The gentleman who had rescued Mattie offered his horse for her use, but she declined the offer, alleging that, as it was quite cold, she preferred walking with her brother. He then rode

on to the house, mentioned the accident, the safety of the son and daughter, and the loss of the carriage and horses, which were soon swept down by the rising water into the river. He politely refused Mr. Allen's invitation to alight, and rode on to the tavern above. That man was Isaac Forster. Why should he have been there at that time?

"'Twas monstrous kind, and right bold and ventursome, too, in him to jump in de water to delibber Miss Mattie," said Uncle Tom. "But dat don't make him a gentleman *yit*. No, sar! I helped to pull ole master out on de Potomac, whar it's a hundred times wider and deeper than dis nasty gully, and dat didn't make *me* a gentleman. No, sar!"

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## CHAPTER V

### THE JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF PROMISE.

THIS mishap proved a serious one to the family. The heavy expenses attendant upon a removal from the East, over the mountains, had drawn so seriously upon Mr. Allen's straitened resources in money as to leave him comparatively helpless to meet new outlays. His horses gone, his carriage ruined, winter pressing on with its numerous claims of preparation—all conspired to add seriously to the parent's anxieties. In these he had the hearty sympathy of his dutiful and loving children. Mattie, in her solitude, pined even more than she would confess, after the friends away—pined after a love she would have forbidden. It was a pure love which she entertained for Victor Carrington. But, oh! how changed were her circumstances from the days when, as his equal in fortune, she won his love! Pride, self-respect, duty—all forbade her to still claim a hand when she was no longer an equal in all things. She had a brave heart; and when the lover followed in the retinue of friends to the Springs, he learned, the night before their parting, that Mattie had resolved to sever their old bonds of engagement.

It was a sudden and a painful blow to the devoted lover.



He protested in vain, however, for the woman's will was made up to the sacrifice ; and Victor wended his way to the East again, having only exacted a promise that a year at least should pass ere Mattie should cut him off forever. A year ! so full of hope yet so full of fear to both hearts !

The winter passed away in that quiet home, not disagreeably, for many things conspired to render the home a happy one. But, the one great sorrow was present—that of expatriation, of lost fortunes, of straitened means and humbled pride ; and the spring came to find Mr. Allen still more of an invalid than usual. On Harry must devolve the duty of the care of his father's estate. It was arranged that he should, on horseback, visit every locality and tract, inspecting each possession fully. In his young heart there still lurked the hope of a brighter day in store, which inspires every well-balanced mind ; and he entered upon his task with a zeal and trust which greatly relieved Mr. Allen's anxiety. Harry, in that winter of thought, had become a man—one feeling the weight of responsibilities and willing to assume them.

It was arranged that Ben Bramble—a most faithful friend and visitor at the mansion—should accompany Harry as guide and counselor. Mr. Allen had confidence in the hunter's sagacity to meet emergencies, and to deal with the many unusually strange and “hard” characters which always go to make up the society of early settlements.

All was arranged, and a first visit was made to the wild and extensive “Loop estate”—in the vicinity of Squire Templeman's fine place. Was it strange that Harry desired to visit that locality first ? The face of fair Helen Templeman was an altar at which it was no sin to worship, and Harry found in it as much comfort as ever fell to the lot of a secret worshiper.

The Loop lands were inspected. A squatter on the place acted as guide ; while Forster's general directions, which had been left with one of these unsolicited tenants, were all brought into requisition, to find boundaries and landmarks. How happened *he* to know that the estate was to be visited and inspected ?

Ben Bramble said but little. He followed the guide over the place, and rather smiled at Harry's occasional remarks

expressive of disappointment at the rough and comparatively worthless character of the estate. The guide was not slow to confess the land poor and undesirable, and Harry returned home to report the tract fully as poor as Forster had represented. Mr. Allen expressed regret, saying he had hopes that it might prove otherwise.

Ben then opened his mouth for the first time with a good sound oath.

"I beg pardon," said the honest fellow, "I beg pardon for such stiff talk; "but, sir, the skunk has played too strong this time!"

"Explain what you mean," said Mr. Allen.

"Mean! Why, thunder and ramrods, I mean that the Loops is *all right*, and that Forster and his rogues is all wrong—I mean that he is a blamed snake, sir—a raal moccasins snake, sir, as creeps slyly without giving nobody any warnin'!"

Ben walked the porch in his excitement, muttering to himself. Finally he stopped before the father and son. Looking them full in the face, he pointed to the dense shadows creeping up the hills as the twilight deepened in the valley:

"There! see that shadder! It is jist like Ike Forster's soul. It tries to darken and blind every fair sweet spot it kin touch. Don't you, sir, let it touch you, for it will surely darken your life! I *knows* that the lands you have come into possession of are enough to make you a nabob, sir—as rich as the Pendletons and the Randolphs and the Washingtons put together, sir; and it makes me *mad* to see that sneak puttin' on his poor face to you. The Loops is a great estate, sir; richer 'n Templeman's by a good many deer-leaps; and that scoundrel who guided the young man around was playin' Forster's game in showing up the rocks and swamps. It makes me so blasted mad that I wants to have a scrimmage with somebody. I could fight a nigger ef he would only say Forster."

With this outburst he strode away down the lawn to ease his mind, in the darkness and alone. Mr. Allen apprehended the nature of the hunter's surmises. His own mind was much excited over the matter, and his suspicions aroused that

Ben's impressions were something more than those of dislike. He resolved to weigh the affair well in his mind and to act with caution.

It was arranged, after further conference, that, to throw all spies and interested parties off their guard, to have it given out that Harry had started for a trip East, over the mountains, upon business of importance. This would allow of Harry's visit to Kentucky without hindrance or observation. He could visit all the tracts unobserved, and, armed with necessary papers, could sell and transfer such as he might desire to dispose of without Forster's interference or knowledge.

As that person's lease and agency expired, over all the premises conveyed by the parties in Alexandria, in October, there was nothing in the way of such sale except the direct interference of that person or his secret agents, whom Mr. Allen now began to discover existed in great numbers, not only of those upon the lands, but among those having no visible means of support—reckless characters, who infested Kanawha valley much to the disorder of society and the loss of property-holders. Shrewd observer as Ben Bramble was, he had detected Forster's knowledge of, and familiarity with these fellows; and Mr. Allen had the full benefit of Ben's information as well as of his suspicions.

Supplied with the necessary papers, and with letters of introduction to several well-known residents of Kentucky, Harry struck out one fine afternoon in April for the East, taking the road which led up the valley. This track he followed leisurely until dark, evidently desiring to reach one of the places on the hills where to rest for the night. The night came on, bringing only starlight, and horse and rider were soon hidden from view by the great shadows of the trees. The "back trail" was then taken, and ere long Harry's horse was clattering off over the country to a road which struck directly down the Big Sandy valley to the west. This he followed all night and the succeeding day, only tarrying occasionally in sequestered spots to give his horse needed rest and grass, while he refreshed himself from the stores of his well-supplied saddlebags. Thus rapidly and secretly journeying, he was enabled to evade any eye

which might have attempted to trace his track over the mountains.

Nothing occurred to our traveler worth mentioning till he arrived at the mouth of Big Sandy, and had climbed the steep and muddy bank of the Kentucky shore. He had scarcely seated himself in the tavern on the bank, when he saw a gentleman, accompanied by a servant, coming down to the river on the same road over which he had just passed. They crossed over, rode up to the house, and dismounted. On entering, the gentleman saluted Harry courteously. He was a short, thick-set man, rather corpulent, with a countenance indicating a sanguine temperament and great good-nature.

"Sir," said the gentleman, "I perceive that you are, like myself, from the Old Dominion (God bless her), and going, I hope, to see the promised land, the dark and bloody ground, the glorious garden of the West."

Before Harry could make reply, the tavern-keeper, who had entered the room, seeing the gentleman, exclaimed :

"Captain Terrell, how do you do? I'm glad to see you. I thought I knew your horse Peacock as I came by the lot. How d'ye do, sir?" to Harry. "On your way, Captain, from the old settlements?"

"Yes, sir; from the worn-out fields of my native land to the fertile banks of Beargrass. Some cool water, my dear sir, if you please; I have suffered extremely from heat and thirst to-day."

The tavern-keeper stepped out, and called a servant to bring some cool water *directly—straight off*. Harry took from his pocket-book a letter, and presenting it to Mr. Terrell, said :

"I hope, sir, I am not mistaken in presenting to you this letter from my father, Edward Allen?"

"I am the very man, sir," said Mr. Terrell, looking at the superscription, "and most happy to have met with you."

He extended his hand to Harry for a most cordial shake. He then opened the letter and read it.

"I hope your father enjoys good health?"

"I am sorry to say, sir, he is somewhat of an invalid at present though not confined."

"How's this, my young friend? This letter bears date, not from Alexandria, but *New Hope*, on the Kanawha. Has your father removed to the West?"

"Yes, sir; last fall we came to live on the Kanawha."

"I never heard that he had left Alexandria—had no idea that, extensively engaged in commercial business as he was, he would ever remove," said Mr. Terrell. "New Hope, on the Great Kanawha—above the mouth of Coal, Mr. Allen?"

"Yes, sir; only a few miles below the falls," said Harry.

"Bless me," said Mr. Terrell, "I must have passed his door; had I known it, I most certainly would have called on him. I recollect, now, a part of your grandfather's military land was located on the Kanawha."

What apparently slight circumstances control, or seem to control, our destinies! Had Mr. Terrell called at *New Hope*, the important and touching events that remain to be told in this narrative would, in all human probability never have happened; the great value of Mr. Allen's lands in Kentucky would have been known to him, and the real character of Isaac Forster, at least as a land-agent.

But we must leave Harry and Mr. Terrell to pursue together their journey to the interior of Kentucky, and return with our readers to the neighborhood of *New Hope*, barely taking time now to inform them that another traveler, an old man of the lower order, shabbily dressed, stayed all night at the tavern at the mouth of *Big Sandy*, while Harry Allen and Mr. Terrell also lodged there.

## CHAPTER VI.

## BEN BRAMBLE EXPERIENCES A SENSATION.

BEN was a frequent and ever welcome visitor at the place after Harry's departure for the West. He seemed to constitute himself a sort of out-of-door guardian for Mattie when he was not away on his "tramps" in quest of sport or to obtain something in the way of deer, turkey or pheasant meat with which to delight the good old stewardess and Uncle Tom, and to excite the surprise and smiles of Mattie for the unexpected dish with which her dear father's palate might be tempted.

Ben one day strolled down the garden to the little retreat where Mattie used to spend much of her time. It was an avenue lined with evergreens, and at the end grew two fresh young willows, which evidently had been transplanted with great care. Ben's curiosity had never been gratified as to the significance of the place and its associations, for thither the young lady used always to stray when one of her sad moods was upon her.

One fine afternoon Ben strayed down the lawn and espied Old Tom at work trimming up the ground around the retreat. He at once directed his steps to the place, and, in answer to his inquiries, learned of the old servant more than was good for his depressed state of mind. Forster had that day been around New Hope, had eaten at Mr. Allen's table, had smiled upon Mattie, and Ben's soul was stirred very deeply—more so than he cared to show.

"It's jist like de spot, Massa Ben, whar dey laid my blessed old missus, at Alexandry." Old Tom stopped work to wipe away the tears coursing down his cheeks. "She war a heab-only woman, missus war; she's gone to de odder side ob Jordan wid great wings ob glory, for I see'd 'em. Great wings ob glory, jist like dat cloud dar," he said, pointing to a pearly rift floating in the pure blue far above. "I sometimes sees her, Massa Ben, lookin' down. Her face is always hid, but I sees her movin' around watchin' us. She nebber comes back in de ghost ob de sperit—*she* don't, 'kase she's too good for dis

yer yearth. It's only de troubled sperits dat comes back as ghostes."

"Why, Tom," said Ben, evidently deeply impressed by the old negro's manner, "you don't believe that men's wisible bodies ever rise from ther graves? It's onnat'ral."

"I don't know 'bout men, but women does," said Uncle Tom; "that is, ther sperits does. I've see'd one myself, Massa Brambel."

"You've seen a ghost, Tom? You deceive yerself, old man. The mortal body rots, and sperits without a body couldn't be seen if they was to rise. Nobody can't see what's onvisible. Besides, the good sperits goes to God, and the wicked to the devil. Them with God is too happy ever to leave him, and the devil never lets go what he gits for a single minnit."

"I tell you," said Uncle Tom, "I've see'd a ghost myself, and de debil is de very one dat does send 'em back to torment de wicked; and dey ethur makes mistakes, or they gits so like de debil hisself dat dey scares and tries to git good people. I ain't gwine to trust 'em 'bout me, I know."

"Whar, now, did you see a ghost?" said Ben.

"Why, I'll tell you de truf, Massa Ben, jist as it happened. Dar was an ole 'oman nigh Alexandry dat lived by herself in a lone house; she used to cuss and swa'r, and drink and quarrel. She was de most obstropolus human I ever see'd. Dey said she had a power of money, but nobody ever see'd it. She had a neffew that was a sailor, and whenever he cum to Alexandry he used to stay wid her. When *his* money gin out, as it did pretty quick arter he got ashore, for he was a disinpated, wild dog, as wicked as he could be to live, he'd put at de ole 'oman for money to frolic on. He said she was as rich as cream, and too stingy to live; so they used to quarrel and cuss one another ebery time he was thar. One mornin', arter he had bin thar, the ole 'oman was found dead in her bed, and he couldn't be found nowhar. He warn't in none of the ships at the wharf, nor in none of the bad houses 'bout town. The doctors said she was kilt by vilence, and everybody laid it to her neffew. They said Billy Dark done it. They couldn't find no money in de house. Well, de ole 'oman was buried between the house and de main road. I was thar when dey put her in de ground, and de grave was at

least five foot deep, and the yearth piled up a-top of that, 'nuff, I thought, to keep her from ever rising. Not long arter dat I was ridin' long dat road into town, thinkin' 'bout her, when I got not fur from de grave (I had bin noddin' from a dram Mr. Custis gin me); all at once I see'd her in her windin' sheet as plain as I see you, Massa Ben. She riz right up out on de ground, and was a comin' toward me so fast that I clapped spurs to de horse, and neber stopped twell I got home."

"You was scared, Tom, by yer own thoughts," said Ben, "and then remagined you see'd her."

"No," replied Uncle Tom; "she had riz, for Billy Dark the next day come and gin hisself up, and said she tormented him so he had no peace in his mind; that he did not know what brought him back to town, but he couldn't help comin'; and the minnit he laid down to sleep, his Aunt Phebe (dat was her name) cum to his bedside in the dark, and said to him, 'Billy, you've sent your soul to hell for thirty dollars.' He said he jumpt right up, and tried to seize her, but she was gone; so I knowed it was she I see'd the evenin' before--dat is, 'twas her ghost, sure enough; for she was gwine then arter Billy. 'Twas she fatched him back to town to git him hung, as he was, you may be sartin."

"People that believe in things," said Ben, "can see 'em when they ain't thar; and them as does wicked things is so tormented by that feelin' that God has put in us to keep us from doing wrong, that ther own wickedness rises up before 'em in the shape of them they've injured, and they take it for a ghost or a sperit; or if they ain't done no harm, but is timorsome, and has bin scared when they was young by ghost stories, ther own fear rises afore 'em; that's the sperit they sees. Billy Dark kilt his aunt, and his consnance raised his own crime in the shape of his aunt. Consnance, Uncle Tom, is a powerful ghost-raiser. Many a time, when I've shot down a buck feedin' in the woods, and not suspicioning that any thing was nigh to hurt him, and arterward laid down to sleep and was jist dozing-like, I've see'd the cretur fallin' down and quiverin' in the death-struggle jist as when I shot him in the wood. Now, 'sposin' it had bin a man or a woman I had shot down, and I was all a trimblin', half awake and half



asleep, then, 'stead of a deer, 'twould have bin a sperit or a ghost, certain, and it would have haunted me jist like his Aunt Phebe's ghost did Billy Dark. I tell ye, Tom, them as dies now, by fair or foul means, never rises till the great day of the gen'ral insurrection."

"Wouldn't you, if you was kilt by onfair means, Massa Ben, want to haunt them as did it?"

"No, Tom, I should want to keep away from 'em even arter I was dead; and when they lay me in the ground, I want to lay 'longside of good people."

"Lor'! Massa Ben, you fear'd, if they berry you 'mong de wicked, dat when de debil come to get his own, he make mistake and take you?"

"No, Tom; but I want to be 'mong good people in life and in death. I've got nobody to care for me now on this yearth—no father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister; and if so be I die anywhar hereabouts, I want to be laid in the ground here in this garden. Mr. Allen and his children fear God, and love him, and ther fellow-creturs too."

Old Tom was moved eyen to tears; he sobbed aloud, and so soon as he could repress his feelings sufficiently to speak, he said:

"Don't talk so, Massa Ben; you make me feel like a child. What I gwine do if ole massa and Miss Mattie die 'fore me? I can't t'ink of dat; I want dem to lay me in de ground, too, and not leave me out here in de woods by myself."

Ben Bramble walked away to the two willows, and sat down between them, while Uncle Tom remained standing for some time leaning on his hoe as if in deep thought, and then dropped the hoe and went off to the house.

"Where is Ben Bramble?" said Mattie, as he entered the door; "I've got a present for him."

"He's down in de bottom of de garden, missus, settin' down whar he is to be buried."

"Good heaven! is he ill? Has he been hurt?"

"Oh no, missus; but he an' I got to talkin' 'bout ghosts and sperits, and so 'bout graves; and he said he wanted to lib and be laid in de ground whar good people lay—whar you an' massa lay, if so be he should be taken away hereabouts."

"And he shall be, Thomas," said Mr. Allen, feelingly, "if

he wishes it ; but here he comes. Why, Ben, you are not thinking about dying, and leaving us, I hope ? Thomas has just told us you have been looking for a place in the garden to be buried. You will live many a long year yet, my good friend, I hope. You are hale and hearty, and may outlive all of us."

"We must all go when we are called," replied Ben, "and that's when God pleases."

"True," said Mr. Allen, "and we should try to be always ready ; and if we are, it matters little when we are taken from this world of trial, and still less where our perishing bodies are laid. Yet it is a natural, and a good feeling too, to wish to be laid in the grave beside those we loved while living, and whose memory is dear to us when dead."

"That's what I was thinkin' of," said Ben, with a look of earnest inquiry at Mr. Allen. "I'm a stranger-like in this country now, and I feel, sir, more like I was at home here, 'mong friends that I vally, than anywhars else."

"Come and live with us, then," said Mattie.

"No, honey," replied Ben ; "my ways ain't like gentlefolks' ways ; I can't be comfortable long anywhars now but in the woods."

"Then," said Mr. Allen, "if you can't live with us always, be with us whenever it gives you pleasure, Ben ; and when you die, if you desire it, and we outlive you, you shall be buried where we will be buried."

"I thank you, sir," said Ben, evidently with deep emotion. "It is a favor I shall vally."

"Don't talk about dying, Ben," said Mattie ; "I've just got a present for you. Now guess what it is."

"I mought as well whistle at a mark," said Ben ; "I should never hit it."

"Never mind if you miss," rejoined Mattie. "It's not often you do that, I believe."

Ben raised his hand to his chin, and a sudden thought seemed to strike him. With an apology for a smile, turning to Mr. Allen, he said :

"It's a cake of soap, I guess—a sort of a hint 'bout not shaving this week. But I never could make out why the women objects to beards, seeing that they are nat'ral ; scrapin'

'em off is only a fashun. The dunkers don't do it, and I've hearn that their wives uses their husbands' beards for a towel. Whar's the soap, Miss Mattie?"

"I declare, Ben, you must be a wizzard to guess so well and I recollect, now, that they always have long beards."

"No, I ain't a wizzard," said Ben; "my father was a Bramble, and my mother a Dennison—Margaret Dennison was her name; and if any of my ancient posterity was a wizzard, it must a bin so fur back I never heard on 'em."

Mattie left the room, and presently, after calling a young hound of Ben's, and saying to her, "Here, Kate, carry the soap to your master," returned, followed by Kate.

The young hound seemed to know what was intended, for she walked straight up to Ben, wagging her tail, and carried the present suspended to her neck. Ben's eyes dilated with pleasure as he detached from her neck a powder-horn of curious and beautiful workmanship, accompanied by a pouch not less remarkable.

"Bless my soul!" said he, "this is of more vally than twenty bar'ls of soap. I guessed clean wrong."

"Indeed, you did not," said Mattie. "I'll be security the soap's there."

"In this nice bag, then?" said Ben, inquiringly.

"No, indeed, but *in the powder-horn!*"

"Soap in a powder-horn! Ha! ha! ha! honey, you can't fool an old hunter arter that fashion. Soap in a powder-horn—ha! ha! ha!"

"Look in the end of the horn, Ben—there's the glass to shave by, and why not the soap?"

Ben looked, and, to his amazement, found a mirror, deeply set in a rim of silver, at the larger end of the horn.

"Well," said he, "this is the beat of all I ever see'd yit—a looking-glass in a powder-horn, to shave by in the woods. But, soap and powder can't go together, no how (holding up the horn to the light). Thar's nothing but powder in *thar*."

"Yes, there is," said the pleased girl, touching the silver knob of the spring that confined the glass in its place. The mirror moved out on its hinge.

"Look in there behind it."

He could hardly believe his own eyes, when, peeping into

ne cavity, he beheld a circular silver basin with a piece of soap in it.

"Pull the basin out by that little chain."

Ben withdrew the basin with the soap, and while he was admiring it, Mattie said :

"You see, Ben, you guessed right, after all."

"So I did, unknowingly ; but I mought as well have thought to have found a dinner-pot, washing-tub and frying-pan in a powder-horn as a looking-glass, shavin'-cup and soap. This is the ingeniourest contrapshion my eyes ever lit upon ; and here's something else in here yit," said he, peeping into the still smaller cavity disclosed by the removal of the basin. "As I live, here's flints and a screw-driver."

"Yes," said Mattie, "and that is all in the horn except the powder, from which you can see they are entirely separated."

Ben's hands actually trembled as he placed and replaced these articles in their proper places a dozen times over, and touched and retouched the spring of the glass. Mattie hung the strap which was attached to the horn over his shoulder.

"It fits his side exactly," remarked she, laughingly, "though the maker took no measure."

"He that made this," said Ben, "could work without any measure ; and here's the picker for the techhole, and the stopper, both fastened by strings, to keep 'em from bein' lost in the hurry of loadin'."

Ben examined the pouch. It was made of the skin of the vicuna of Peru. In its false bottom it contained a case with two razors, a brush and comb, and above were the usual divisions for small game, bullets, pellets, etc. Ben was at some loss to discover how to get at the lower compartment, till Mattie showed him a false flap, buttoned to the upper edge of the pouch, under the exterior flap or cover proper. On unbuttoning this, the case came out below the upper divisions. After replacing all, and slinging the pouch over his shoulder, Ben looked up at Mattie and said :

"I never had sich a present afore since I was born ; and I prize it mighty high, but not so high, Miss Mattie, as I vally the good-will of the giver. I'll try to keep that, and these

too, as long as there's breath in my body." The good fellow pressed the gift to his lips, and slipped away down the lawn to ease his heart in a real manly cry. Of such stuff are your true, brave souls made.

We do not certainly know how Mattie obtained these curious and costly articles, evidently of European manufacture, which she presented to Ben Bramble; but we suspect that a certain young gentleman, then in England, had received so graphic an account of Ben from one of his correspondents in America, that he had them made expressly for him. This we do know, that they, and sundry other articles and packages, were contained in a large deal box, which arrived at Mr. Allen's a few days before, directed to "Miss Mattie Wynne Allen, Kanawha county, Virginia, U. S. of N. A. To the care of Edwin Bird, Esq., Alexandria, Virginia. This side up. V. C."

We suppose that the initials, U. S. of N. A., are to be translated "*United States of North America.*" But what the V. C. meant we can only surmise.

Ben returned after a long absence, his face again overclouded. Mattie was sitting on the porch, evidently conversing with pleasant memories. He watched her a moment in silence, while a feeling of pain quickly rested on his face. He walked to the porch and seated himself in silence on the steps.

"I hope you are not unwell, Ben; you look weary and low-spirited to-day," said Mattie, kindly.

"Not sick, nor tired; but sorry, honey," said Ben.

"Why so?" said she.

"Zac Forster's been here to-day tryin' to make hisself agreeable," he spoke out, nervously and strongly.

"And ought not everybody to try to make themselves agreeable?" said Mattie.

"Yes, when they do it from good-natur, and mean it in nat'ral earnest. But when Zac Forster's most agreeable-like, it's my notion he's most dangerous; just like a snake that makes his skin shine with the most beautiful colors when he's charmin' a bird. I s'pose you know what he does that for?"

Mattie blushed, and thinking that Ben had by some means discovered that Mr. Forster was in love with her, she said :

"Ben, he may charm me as much as he can, I shall hardly fall in love with Mr. Forster. I am not a bird to flutter up to the mouth of the charmer."

Ben looked up at her, all lovely as she was, and suffused with the deepest tints of the rose. A new light broke upon his mind. The object of Forster's designs, he thought, stood before him, and he had had no more idea of Forster's loving her, or aspiring to the hand of Mattie Allen, than of his attempting to pluck a star from the heavens. He rose from his seat, and with a look of blasted terror, and an energy of expression that made Mattie tremble, he exclaimed, fixing his eyes upon her :

"Mattie Allen, I'd rather see a painter lapping yer heart's blood, or Simon Grety and the wild Indians roast you alive after tearing off that beautiful hair from your quiverin' skull, than to see you the wife of Zac Forster. I love you, Mattie Allen, God knows, but not with a lovyer's love ; I ain't such a fool as that. *Bewar' of that man!* Don't let him come nigh you ; a young, innocent cretur like you don't know what some men can do. A power is gin 'em over the hearts of women. They has means that no mortal woman knows on or can hold out agin. They has the gift of charmin', the same as the wicked serpent ; and the poor gal they fixes ther glarin' eyes upon comes nigher and nigher, while he circles round and round, and shines brighter and brighter, till the fascinated gal, like the poor bird, onable to fly, is seized, and gives the death cry—too late, too late ; all the bright colors is gone, and the poor innocent cretur, lookin' on him with her dyin' eyes, sees nothin' but a rough, scaly snake, with his pison fangs in her heart."

"Oh ! don't talk so," said Mattie ; "my dear, kind friend, you make me shudder. You don't know what a frightful picture you have drawn."

"It ain't a pictur'," said Ben ; "it's the truth ; I've see'd it. I want you to know it's *true*, to guard yerself agin it, that you may never have a feelin' experience of it, Mattie," he added.

"Thank you, Ben, thank you ; but be assured there is no danger."

"Thar *is* danger ; and them that don't see it is aptest to fall into it. I've see'd women that hated a man like pison—wouldn't let him tech 'em ; and yet, arter he had conjured 'em in some onaccountable way, they'd resk life for him, though he was wicked, and mean, and ugly. It's a gift, Miss Mattie, as sure as you are born—a secret gift. Thar was one Vincent Wash in Old Virginny—mayhap you have hearn of him. He was an onfavored, onlarnt man of the common sort, ongentlemanlike in his manners, and not rich ; yet he married seven wives, one arter another, as fast as they died, and some on 'em was quality, high-larnt gals, and beautiful, that had plenty of other men to ax 'em, too ; so it warn't for the lack of a husband they took him. Some women marries whether or no, just to be married (more fools they) ; but that warn't their case that married that man through conjuration ; some said it was powders ; some said it was his breath, or somethin' that come out on his eyes. He said if he could only git nigh enough to put his hand upon any mortal woman, she'd be sure to give up. Many women that heard on him, and some on 'em not the purtiest in the world, was so afeard of the man, that they said, ' Please God, he shouldn't tech 'em with a forty-foot pole.' Many men, I b'lieve, has the power of that man, that don't know it twell they try, like them as can find water with a green twig, or can put ther thoughts and feelin's into some other people by looking in ther eyes and holdin' ther thumbs. I tell you, bewar' of Zac Forster. I've see'd him do strange, onnat'ral things with my own eyes."

"Why, Ben, the days of witchcraft are passed," said Mattie.

"Don't you b'lieve it, honey. Men and women bewitch one another yit ; and some men can do other onnat'ral things, and Zac Forster is one on 'em. I was once a car-ryin' a chain for him, Nat Colly and I. He was on afore with his compass, and when he got to the bank of the New River, we see'd him walkin' up and down the bank, starin' at somethin' on t'other side. So, when we measured up to the water, he says, ' Well, boys, the line crosses here to that

## CONJURATION.

tree on the bank. You can't measure it with the chain, but I know the distance.' 'It's in the deed,' says I. 'No,' says he, 'the man that measured afore was no conjurer, and has put it wrong in the deed! but I've measured it while you were comin' up.' Now I know'd he hadn't crossed the river, and had never bin thar before, for it was jist arter he come out here from the old settlements. 'How fur is it?' says I. 'If I was to tell you in poles and links,' says he, 'you wouldn't know; but it's exactly one hundred and seventeen yards and nine inches.' And off he went to the ferry. Nat Colly and I stared at one another. 'It's guess-work,' says I. 'Let's measure it,' says he; 'I've got a trout-line jist below here long enough to stretch across.' So we went and got the line and Nat's canoe, and we measured from the last stick to the tree. It was a box elder, and, as sure as I'm a livin' man, it was exactly as he said—one hundred and seventeen yards and nine inches; for Nat had a two-foot rule in his pocket, and we cut a hickory sprout, and made a yard-stick, and measured the line that stretched across from the stick to the tree.

"Arter we went up to the ferry we were talkin' 'bout the distance Nat's rifle would carry a ball. Nat was standin' on a stone in the yard, and he said, 'She'll carry a ball from whar I stand straight to that lower limb on the big wa'nut-tree.' 'She won't,' says I, 'for it's two hundred yards, and the ball will fall some. She's too small in the bore for that.' He up with his gun and blazed away, and struck just below the limb. 'Thar, now,' says I, 'didn't I tell you so?' 'It's more nor two hundred yards,' says he, 'and I'll measure it. Let's go in the house and get a ball of twine.' Forster was sittin' in the porch listenin', and when we cum back—we didn't stay ten minits—he says, 'You needn't measure; Nat's right. The line of the ball through the air is two hundred and twenty-eight yards and a half.' 'Whar from?' says I. 'From the muzzle of his rifle as he stood on the stone,' says he. 'It can't be,' says I, 'and I'll measure it.' 'Why, I have measured it,' says he, 'better than you can with any line.' 'How?' says I. 'By a conjuration,' says he. Well, I wasn't satisfied. 'Here, Nat, tie this eend of the string round the gun, and make a knot on it at the muzzle; stand



on the rock, and I'll go with the ball and climb the tree, and then do you take aim, and I'll stretch the string.' I clumb the tree at least thirty foot, sot on the limb, and done it. It was jist as Forster said. Now, no man, by nat'ral power and fair means, can measure a line through the air. I don't want, and I don't want them as I cares for, to have nothin' to do with them that's got onnat'ral gifts."

"Why, Ben," said Mattie, "there's nothing strange or unnatural in that; any mathematician can easily do the same."

Ben shook his head, saying:

"I don't want 'em 'bout me if they are like Zac Forster. I don't believe in ghosts and sperits of dead men, but I do believe in onnat'ral powers and gifts in livin' men and women."

Ben, seeing Mr. Allen approaching the house, went out to meet him. They stood conversing in the yard for half an hour; and Mattie could readily perceive, from Ben's earnest manner and vehement gestures, the deep interest which he felt in the subject of their conversation.

When he returned to the house, Ben seemed to be more cheerful. The cloud had passed off from his honest face.

"Good-by, honey! I wish you much joy!" he said, pulling off his cap, bowing, and hurrying away.

"He is a noble fellow," remarked Mr. Allen, as Ben disappeared.

"He is, indeed," was Mattie's earnest response.

Mattie did not surmise that Ben's disquiet had been banished by Mr. Allen's assurance that his daughter's hand was pledged to one every way worthy of her.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CONFEDERATE ROGUES.

THE letter already referred to, written by Jones Carter to his "Dear Zack," lifted the veil somewhat on Forster's true character and hinted that his associations were not of the most reputable stamp. It will be found that Kanawha valley held within its precincts many a rogue, but that few were more clever at villainy than this same "honest Isaac Forster." As promised in that letter, Carter's son, Samuel—a dissipated and reckless fellow, not entirely lost to good principles however vicious his associations might be—visited the valley, charged with a mission from the elder Carter, "in the horse business," at Alexandria, to Forster and several other confederates "in the line." Among these confederates should now be mentioned Jimmy Dixon—a professed jockey, who was well known throughout that region, as one of the most noted traders and most ridiculous liars in all the settlements. He was a gambler as well as trader, fleecing all who were unlucky enough to fall into his hands. The rendezvous for those who seemed particularly familiar with Dixon was at Simpson's store—a place of low resort not far from the Bal-lenger place, where the worst characters of that entire region were sure to congregate. To this foul den Carter soon found his way, and, being "just from the dépôt," was well supplied with money. The "dépôt" was Alexandria, where Carter the elder "operated" in the horse-trade—disposing of horses which his *friends* in the valley sent to him.

One evening in April, a few days succeeding the departure of Harry for Kentucky, an old man, as if just in from a long journey, rode by Simpson's store. He was hailed by Dixon, but refusing to alight passed on. A signal, however, called Dixon out and the two were soon together, some distance up the road.

"Forster wants you, Dixon," said the fellow on the horse.

"What's up?"

"Don't exactly know. He's mighty consarned about something. I guess somebody's got in the ring."

"Oh, I guess not," said Dixon. "Howsomever I'll go and see. Where you from, now?"

"Just in from Kentuck."

"Any luck?"

"Purty good—that is, fair—four hosses will be in the Loops to-night."

"Where's Swinton?"

"Over the river. He's after big game, I guess, though it's hard to tell. His coin goes well. I have seen nothin' else but them hills for ever so long."

"Ha! ha! Swinton is sharp enough and smart enough for a Congressman, and I *shouldn't* wonder if he should find his way to Washington. We kin send him to Richmond at any time he says so; but I guess he's bound to go to Washington."

"Ef he wants to go he must be sent," said the horseman, as he rode along.

Obed Stapler was this rogue's name. He, as the reader will surmise, was one of the confederates, operating "along the line," from Kentucky. His relations to our story will be more clearly apprehended by recurring to a portion of an interview which had been held between him and Forster.

"Impossible, Obed Stapler," said Isaac, "you are mistaken; young Allen has gone to Old Virginia."

"No such thing," said Obed. "I tell you I stayed all night at the mouth of Big Sandy, and he was there on his way to the district of Kentucky. I heard Mr. Terrell call him by his name twenty times; besides, I see'd the young man from the bush when he went to see that land his father claims in the Loop. I am not mistaken, Mr. Forster."

"What Terrell?" said Isaac.

"Captain Dick Terrell, that lives on Beargrass. I know him as well as I know you, Mr. Forster—that is, by sight."

Isaac's face became black as night. He paced the room, and muttered to himself, "The best tract joins Terrell's land. All will be known. What I do must be done quickly. I thought it strange young Carter did not meet him. I thought he must have passed him in the night. They suspect; that's the reason they reported he was going to Virginia. 'Twas done to deceive me as to his motions—a deep scheme!" Thus muttering, he strode up to Stapler, seized him by the arm, and

looking with the eyes of a fiend flashing fury in his face, he said :

"Obed Stapler, it's a lie! you are, for some purpose, attempting to deceive me, and if you do, I'll send your soul to perdition."

"I tell you it's the truth, sir," said the old man, trembling from head to foot. "I know I can't deceive you if I was to try, which God knows I never did."

Forster relaxed his iron grasp, turned to the table, poured out half a tumbler of spirits, and drank it off at a draught.

"Tell Dixon—you'll find him at the store or on the road somewhere as you go along—to come here directly. Be off, sir."

Stapler, glad to get away, rose and departed instantly, looking behind as if he expected a bullet through his head before he reached his horse. We already know that he delivered Forster's message to Mr. Dixon. The latter was very soon at Mr. Forster's, for he knew, from Stapler's remarks about Forster, to use his own words, that there was "a screw loose somewhere." He found Isaac pacing the room like a caged tiger, in deep thought. His eyes were red and his face flushed.

In order to understand the conversation which ensued between these men, it is necessary to make our readers acquainted with certain particulars in relation to Mr. James Dixon. In passing through the Loop, and to and from the more eastern parts of Virginia, he had frequently called at Squire Templeman's; and although Miss Helen despised the man for his great mendacity and evident looseness of moral principles, yet she was amused by his fabulous tales, laughed at them and at him—which latter he did not perceive—asked him many questions about persons with whom she was acquainted in Old Virginia, and conversed with him so freely and pleasantly that Jimmy took it into his head that she was very much pleased with him, if not in love. It flattered his vanity so much that he determined to court the young lady in pure pity. He felt sure of success. The more he saw of her, and the more the idea of courting her occupied his mind, the more did he become interested in Miss Helen, till at last he was really as much in love with her as it was possible for such a man to be.

"What's wanting, Mr. Forster?" said Dixon, as he entered the room. "Obed Stapler told me you wanted to see me."

"Where," said Forster, "is that squinting rascal that went with you as a driver to Virginia—Slocus I think you called him?"

"I sent him off," replied Jimmy; "he was a d—d deal too knowing, and had too much curiosity for my use."

"Where is he?" said Isaac again.

"Gone to Kentucky," replied Jimmy.

"*I thought so*," said Isaac, very slowly, and pausing at every word. "And where is young Allen?" he continued.

"Why, gone to Old Virginia," replied Jimmy.

Isaac raised his eyes, and fixing them on Jimmy, said: "It's no such thing, Dixon; that was only a sham report to blind your eyes. *He's gone to Kentucky to hunt up Slocus*. He's not content with disappointing your just expectations of marrying Templeman's daughter—he is aiming at your reputation and life, Mr. Dixon, and the poor devil wants the rewards offered for counterfeiters, their aiders and abettors. He's on a hot trail after you."

Jimmy turned pale as ashes. Isaac watched his countenance, and, after a short pause, he resumed:

"They are drawing the net around you, my friend; and unless you have the sense and courage to break the meshes, it's all over with you."

"Gone to Kentucky to hunt up Slocus, did you say, sir?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes, man, didn't you hear what I said? Stapler passed him at the mouth of Big Sandy, and heard him making particular inquiries when Slocus passed, and described him: red hair, limps in the left foot, squints with the right eye, five feet nine inches high. He'll bribe that fellow, bring him back, and unless he is followed and stopped in his proceedings—"

"I'll follow him and stop him too. He shall never come back alive. I can track up people as well as Mr. William Henry Allen, I guess," said Jimmy.

"I thought it my duty to a friend, Mr. Dixon, as soon as I became informed of the danger of his position, to tell him of it," said Isaac Forster, "that he might take such measures as are due to his affections, his character, and his life."

"A thousand thanks, Mr. Forster. I'm bound to you for life, sir. I'll be after the villain in two hours. How are you off, friend Forster, for loose cash? I must borrow a small sum if you can spare it."

"I can let you have a couple of hundred on the usual terms."

"Oh, of course," said Jimmy.

"And," said Isaac, "if I don't hear from you by—what time shall I say?"

"The first of July," replied Jimmy; "for this matter requires caution and fixing to do it right."

"Very well," said Isaac, "if I don't hear from you before the first of July, I may certainly know that you have finished your business in Kentucky satisfactorily."

"Yes," replied Jimmy; "if it ain't finished by that day, you'll hear it from me. But finished it shall be, one way or another."

"Remember, Dixon, that I am greatly interested as a friend," said Forster, "in your success; and punctuality is all-important in friendship as well as in business; a word will be sufficient, such as, 'I am happy to inform you my business in Kentucky has been settled to my satisfaction.'"

"I understand," said Jimmy; "no particulars need be mentioned."

"And," said Forster, "let me give you one piece of advice, my young friend: it is better to let things of importance alone than to half do them, or to trust them to incompetent agents, or to persons who may prove unfaithful. It is not every man that offers to discharge a delicate and important trust that can be relied on; I know that from my own experience, Mr. Dixon."

Isaac Forster did know it from his own experience. He handed Jimmy two hundred dollars, took his note for the same, and Jimmy immediately departed. Isaac looked after him as he rode off at full gallop, and said:

"*He'll do it.* A woman is in the case. He'll do it." And "honest Isaac" was happy again.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## JOB TERRY, THE PEDDLER.

JOB TERRY was a character, such as the backwoods only can produce. A sober, honest, industrious fellow every settler knew Job—every family had a welcome for him as he passed around his well-beaten circuit, in his six months' visits with his little pack of merchandise, and great one of news, novelties, and small-talk. At every house, as night-fall came, Job was invited to stay all night. He was never charged for his accommodation; but the good housewife or the children were sure to receive an equivalent in some little useful or agreeable present made at the moment of his departure. He scattered through the country more copies of "Poor Richard," "The Housewife's Guide," "The Farmer's Almanac," "Live and Let Live," etc., etc., than any other man, and we verily believe that few *colporteurs* of modern days diffuse more information than did Job Terry. He had been this spring to Old Virginia for his usual supply of goods.

On his return, as soon as he passed the Blue Ridge into the valley, he was much annoyed by counterfeit money, offered to him by persons whom he knew to be honest, and above all suspicion of attempting knowingly to pass spurious coin. This annoyance increased as he came on westward.

He had examined these coins so carefully, and weighed them so often on the ends of his fingers, that he could distinguish them instantly, even by touch in the dark. He traveled on westward, and on the first of July, a very warm day, arrived at the store of Simpson, between the Falls of Kanawha and Mr. Allen's.

"How are you, friend Terry?" said Mr. Simpson.

"Well, I thank you, Mr. Simpson, but very warm and tired," said Job, taking off his pack and sitting down. "What's the news on the river?"

"None worth relating," replied Mr. Simpson; "dull times, and but little money. I've taken in so little change lately, that I couldn't change a twenty-dollar bill for Mr. Allen this

morning. He said he wanted change for you, friend Job, but could not get it."

"Why, he needn't have put himself to any trouble about that," said Job. "He will pay, I know. There ain't an honest man in the world than that same Mr. Allen."

"What news eastward?" said Mr. Simpson.

"Why, old rascals and new counterfeits," replied Job. "Your servant, Mr. Forster; you were sitting so still I didn't see you."

Mr. Forster was sitting behind the door reading a newspaper. He nodded to Job, and continued reading.

"New counterfeits?" said Simpson.

"Yes," replied Terry. "The old ones are plenty as blackberries all the way from Waynesborough to this place. I got used to them, and could tell them day or night, by sight or touch. But yesterday, at the falls, a new one deceived me—wonderfully well executed, and made to look old, and rubbed, but lately coined, I'll be sworn. Here it is. I got it of that frolicking young blade, Sam Carter, who had much better be at home than out here drinking, and gaming, and passing counterfeit money."

Simpson looked at the bad dollar, and handed it to Mr. Forster, saying:

"If that's a counterfeit I'm no judge of money. What do you say, Mr. Forster?"

"I know very little of such things," said Isaac, examining the piece of money closely, "but I should say that is a good dollar; if it is not, it would deceive me."

"Give me a file," said Terry to Simpson; "I'll convince you in a moment."

He took the file handed to him, and drawing it across the edge of the dollar, held it up to the light, and said:

"Look there, gentlemen; nothing but base metal—not fourpence worth of silver in it. I really do think, Mr. Forster, that you, and other gentlemen of property, and influence, and knowledge, who have large dealings in money, and are so much interested that it should be genuine, should take measures to detect and bring to punishment the makers and circulators of these counterfeits. They must be hereabouts somewhere, for this is one of a new stamp, the first I've met with,



and depend upon it, not far from the place where it was made. I for one, gentlemen, shall keep my eyes open, and my ears too, and will do all I can, Mr. Forster, to rid the country of such rascals."

"That's the duty of every good citizen," said Isaac. "You got it, you say, of young Carter?"

"Yes, sir," said Job, "I did. The young man was half drunk, and said, at first, he had no change to pay me for a handkerchief he asked to look at, saying he had somehow lost his handkerchief the night before; then he burst out a laughing, and said: 'How forgetful I am; here's a dollar for the handkerchief, Mr. Peddler. I remember, now, that last night I was out of silver, and Mr. Forster gave me five dollars in silver for a note.'"

"That's all a mistake," said Forster, quickly; "the young fellow must have been intoxicated, as you say, Mr. Terry. I gave him no change, but he changed a five-dollar note for me."

"These wild, rattling young fellows," said Simpson, "hardly ever know how their money comes or goes."

Job, seeing Mr. Forster about to depart, said to him:

"If you see Mr. Allen, sir, in passing his house, please to say to him I shall be along to-morrow."

"Very well," said Forster, bidding them good-day, and riding off.

"How immensely rich that man has got to be," said Simpson to Job. "He is buying every good piece of land in the market, and paying the cash down for it."

"He gets it the cheaper for that, friend Simpson. Discount—discount, sir—heavy discount is allowed for cash, you know, in these hard times. Any thing in my way, Mr. Simpson?"

"Yes; open your pack."

Job opened his pack, threw its contents on the counter, told Simpson to help himself, and sat himself down to read a book which he took from his pocket. After a little while he arose, put his articles into his pack, strapped it on his back, saying, "Good-by, Mr. Simpson; any thing in my line to accommodate your customers is always at your service. You've taken but little to-day—only a few ribbons, pins and needles. Not now," added he, on Simpson's offering to pay him for the

articles. "Six months, or when I go East, will be time enough."

Job trudged off, and Mr. Simpson went to the desk in his little back room to enter the articles purchased of Job Terry in his daybook.

Forster rode from Simpson's store straight to his own house, expecting to find young Carter there. He found him and held a long conversation with him, the subject of which may be inferred from some expressions of Carter after Forster went out, and from succeeding events. Isaac retired to his own chamber, and locked the door—his invariable practice.

Carter, who was even then slightly intoxicated, muttered to himself, "I'll cane that pack-ridden rascal. I pass counterfeit money knowingly. Forster's right—I must put a stop to such insolence. He's a pretty fellow, that lying peddler, upon my word! He'll place my character in its true light, will he? I'll see him as he comes down the road, that's arranged; and so now to bed, and a good comfortable snooze I'll have, after two nights' loss of sleep at little loo and all-fours."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### A PROPOSAL, AN ARREST, AND A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

THE day after that on which Job Terry called at Simpson's store, Isaac Forster, according to expressed determination, went to Mr. Allen's in order to make his proposals to Mattie. He arrived there about eleven o'clock, dressed and equipped after the most approved fashion of gentlemen in search of a wife. He was in high spirits, and confident of success. Miss Allen was not taken unawares. What young lady ever is, if the gentleman acts as gentlemen should who are in love? The premonitory symptoms are as evident to them as are those of any other eruptive disease about to break out to a Philadelphia doctor.

The young lady was composed and acted without constraint. The lover was equally composed and acted as if engaged in

any ordinary business transaction which demanded only a little form to consummate it. He began by asserting that Miss Allen could not be ignorant of the relations which he sustained to her father, assuming that, in view of his (Mr. Allen's) visibly failing health it was but a simple duty for him (Mr. Forster) to sustain a closer relation than a mere formal agency could give him. Such a position he would sustain, if for no other reason than to care for Miss Allen in event of her parent's decease.

The man of business had proceeded thus far, when Mattie arose, her eyes suffused in tears, but every lineament of her face expressive of anger.

"I have given you no excuse, Mr. Forster, for this interview," she said, with cold deliberation. "I am equally astonished and indignant at your proposal. I can sustain no relations whatever with you; and, after this presumption on your part, I am sure my dear father will cease to give you any excuse for ever calling at his house." Saying this, she swept from the room. Forster had risen in his astonishment. His equanimity was disturbed — his self-love wounded — his hatred aroused.

"You will repent of this, young woman!" she heard him hiss, as the door shut him in.

For half an hour he sat down in the room. Mr. Allen was in his library. If his daughter had gone to him and confided the fact of the interview, the old gentleman would soon be in, doubtless, to order the agent from the house. If he did not appear, then he (Forster) would not leave the premises except at his leisure. Taking a newspaper from the mantel he passed out to the porch and seated himself there to observe while he seemed absorbed in "reading the news."

The family at New Hope had but few visitors; among them were Mr. John Glover and his sister Mary, the son and daughter of one of the earliest settlers on the Great Kanawha. They were plain, good people, and Mary Glover was an interesting, sweet girl, with a pretty face, artless manners, and an excellent heart. She loved Mattie Allen exceedingly. In the words of her brother John, she thought Miss Mattie the finest thing in the whole world. Mattie reciprocated the affection. Soon after dinner they came over to Mr. Allen's. Mattie and

Mary ran into the chamber of the former, and remained there until Uncle Tom announced the arrival of Job Terry, the peddler. Then they immediately repaired to the sitting-room, where John Glover joined them, as well as Mr. Allen. Job came up on the porch, when Mr. Allen addressed him, saying :

"Mr. Terry, I am sorry I have not the change I owe you. I have attempted to procure it in the neighborhood, but I could not get it, and I expect that all my daughter has you will get to-day. You are going down the river, I suppose, and you must call on your return, when I hope I shall have it ready for you."

"It makes no odds in the world, sir," replied Job. "I did not call for that, but to see you all, and to sell the young folks something if I can, or you, sir, if you want any thing I've got."

Whereupon a pleasant scene followed of examining the pack, discussing styles and making up the many little wants of a lady's work-basket and boudoir. When the young ladies had finished their purchases, Mattie handed Job an old English guinea in payment. He looked at it closely, and weighed it on the tip of his little finger.

"A good English piece," said he; "such yellow-boys are scarce out here—of good weight. I should know it among a thousand from this mark on the edge," and he handed it to John Glover, who examined it casually, as also did his sister. The purchases amounted to twenty-two shillings. Job returned change for the guinea, then busied himself in gathering and packing his goods which were strewn over the floor in pretty confusion.

Forster, who was sitting in the porch, saw every thing that passed, and heard every word, although he seemed to be occupied in reading the newspaper. Mr. Glover and his sister took leave of Mattie, and bidding Mr. Forster good-evening as they passed through the porch, mounted their horses and rode away. Mr. Forster had ordered his horse to be brought out, but he still seemed to be poring over the newspaper. When Mattie saw Job preparing to fasten his pack on his back, she invited him to stay all night; but he declined her invitation, and just as twilight set in he bade her farewell and departed. Mr. Allen met him in the yard. They went in

together at the back door of Mr. Allen's room. Shortly after the peddler went his way.

Mattie returned to her chamber with her little purchases. Mr. Allen came into the sitting-room, approached the chimney-piece, and then went out again at the back door of his room. Forster immediately rose from his seat, entered the room, laid the newspaper on the mantelpiece, and departed. The relation of these minute circumstances may appear tedious, but the events which followed them render it necessary to make them known.

The next morning Mr. Allen was quite unwell, and did not get up to breakfast. While Mattie was arranging the things on the breakfast-table, she saw old Tom in earnest conversation with a man on horseback at the gate, who immediately after rode away at full gallop. Thomas ran to the house, exhibiting signs of amazement and sorrow, rushed into the room where his young mistress was, and exclaimed :

"Oh Lor' ! Missus, somebody has gone kil'd Massa Job Terry, de peddler. He's layin' in de road, dat man says, jist below our fence, stone dead. He's a ridin' round collectin' de neighbors for to hab a rinquest on de body. I told him that my Massa was onwell, and hadn't got up, so he rode on."

Mattie was very much shocked at this horrible news, which was true. She trembled excessively, and felt a strange fear creeping over her. As soon as she recovered strength to walk she hastened to her father's chamber, and communicated to him the sad intelligence. He expressed great astonishment and sorrow, and seemed anxious to get up, but his daughter prevailed on him to remain in bed, for she saw, from his looks, that he was feverish, and had spent a restless night. She offered to bring him something to eat or drink, but he refused to taste any thing, and Tom took away the untouched food from the breakfast-table.

In a very short time several men were seen passing down the road, and directly afterward a man came up the road, stopped at the gate, and inquired for Mr. Allen. Tom told him his master was sick in bed, and if he wanted to see him, he might get down and go into the house. The man seemed at a loss what to do ; he, however, after a little time, rode

away, saying, "If he's sick in bed, he can't serve on the jury."

Tom returned to the house, went to Mr. Allen's room, and reported to his master and Mattie what the man said. Mr. Allen got up and dressed, and ordered his horse, with the intention of riding to the place where he supposed the coroner's inquest was assembling; but Mattie entreated him not to go, saying they could certainly find persons whose health would permit them to perform the duties of jurymen without the danger of being made ill; that he was very weak and feverish, and in no condition to exercise his mind or body in so serious a public service. He yielded to her entreaties, and lay down again on his bed till about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, when, feeling better, he walked into the porch and sat down. He was scarcely seated, when four men rode up to the gate, alighted from their horses, entered the yard-gate, and walked up to the porch.

"Walk in, gentlemen," said Mr. Allen, "and take seats."

They entered the porch, but remained standing, and one of them stepped up to Mr. Allen, and handing him a paper, said:

"It is my disagreeable duty, sir, to arrest you, at the suit of the commonwealth, for the murder of Job Terry."

"*Me!*" said Mr. Allen; "*me!* for the murder of Job Terry?"

"Yes, sir," repeated the officer; "read the warrant." Mr. Allen read the paper. "Here's another, sir; a search-warrant, also."

Mr. Allen handed the man his keys, and said:

"Perform your duty, sir."

The officer and another man went into Mr. Allen's chamber, and examined the contents of his desk, while the two other men remained with Mr. Allen in the porch. The officer soon returned, and his melancholy looks—for he was a benevolent, kind-hearted man—indicated but too plainly that he had found what the warrant directed him to search for, and that the probability of Mr. Allen's guilt was confirmed.

Stunned and shocked as he was, Mr. Allen retained his self-possession. He requested to be permitted to see his daughter and servants. The officer told him he was very

sorry that his duty forced him to keep him in his custody, and that he could not permit him to leave his presence or go out of his sight, but that he would either have them sent for or would accompany him to where they were. Mr. Allen preferred the latter, and they went to Mattie's chamber. They found her reading, profoundly ignorant of what had just taken place. Her father broke the matter to his daughter in the most gentle terms that the nature of the case admitted.

‘We shall not attempt to describe the scene that followed; we must leave it to the imagination of our readers. No adequate idea can be formed of the astonishment, horror and poignant distress that overwhelmed her. When the first tide of the torrent of mingled emotions began to subside, she threw herself on her father's neck, exclaiming, amid her agonizing sobs :

“Never, never, my father! they shall not tear you from me. Oh! sir, he is not guilty—no, no, he never harbored the thought of a crime in his life. Oh! sir, believe me, he is innocent—he *is* innocent; do not—do not carry him away. He is ill—very ill—you will kill him.”

Her bosom heaved with fearful violence, and she gasped for every breath which she drew. Thomas heard her sobs, and he and Charlotte, the hired woman, came to the door.

“What de matter, massa, wid Miss Mattie?”

“Nothing but a mistake, Thomas. Saddle my horse; I have to leave her only for a short time, to satisfy the magistrate that I had nothing to do with the death of Job Terry.”

“Who said you did, massa? Dat man dat says so ain’t fit-tin’ to live--de trufe ain’t in him. Don’t you mind ’em, Miss Mattie; dey ain’t gwine to hurt a hair ob his head. It’s all a lie, and God knows it—dat he does.”

“Thomas,” said his master, “bring my horse to the gate, and take another and ride quickly to Mr. Glover’s, and present my compliments to Mr. John Glover and Miss Mary, and request them to come over immediately and stay with my daughter till my return.”

“Yes, sar,” said Thomas.

"Father," said Mattie, "I must go with you; I shall never see you again. You will be ill, sir, very ill. Oh! sir, let him stay here, and if it be necessary, stay with him. Father, you will not leave me, will you?"

"My daughter, the law must be obeyed. Let us trust in the Supreme Lawgiver of the universe. My dearest child, be composed; I shall be with you again in a few hours. Your brother may arrive in my absence—at furthest by to-morrow; stay here to receive him—to inform him of what has happened; and if I should not return to-night, you can accompany him to where I may be."

Mr. Allen carefully avoided using the word *prison*; he knew that word would determine her to go with him. After some time he tore himself from the arms of his child, called Charlotte, the stewardess, gave her a few brief directions, and departed with the officers of the law. Oh! how his heart bled for the sufferings of that daughter. He gave not a thought to his own situation. The idea of danger to his own life was not entertained for one moment. He knew nothing of the extraordinary chain of events which induced the coroner's jury to find him guilty of the murder of the peddler, and that officer to issue a warrant for his apprehension. He imagined that a mere vague suspicion, growing out of the circumstances of the peddler's having been at his house late in the evening before, and of his body being found near his place of residence, was the only ground of their action. In this he was greatly mistaken, as a brief relation of the circumstances of the inquest will show.

Two men, riding early in the morning after the day that the peddler left Mr. Allen's, up the road to Simpson's store, discovered the body of the peddler lying in the edge of the road, with his pack fastened on his back. They dismounted, and found that the man was dead. One of them agreed to stay near the body while the other should give the alarm to the neighbors, a number of whom were soon collected on the ground, and the coroner was sent for, whom the messenger met not a mile from the place. A jury was empaneled and sworn, and they proceeded to examine the body. It was known by every one of the jurors to be the body of Job Terry. A slight contusion was first observed on the side of



the head, which the doctor declared could not have caused the death of the man. On stripping off the clothes, two wounds on the left side were seen. The doctor examined and probed them, and declared the wounds to have caused death.

While the examination of the body was going on, persons were walking around in all directions, to see if any discoveries connected with the death of the man could be made. At some distance from the body, down by the river and behind a rock, a white cambric handkerchief was found sticking to a brier, as if the brier had caught in it while sticking out of the pocket of some one, and had pulled it out. On the handkerchief were stains of blood. It was marked on the corner, *Ed. Allen, No. 7*; at the same place, concealed beneath a stone and covered with loose earth, a dirk or stiletto was discovered. It was a beautiful and costly instrument, was very bloody, and had the initials *E. A.* on the handle. The doctor inserted it into the wounds, and it was plain to every one of the jury that the mortal wounds were inflicted with that dirk. Two of the jurors asserted that they had seen that instrument on the chimney-piece at Mr. Allen's, and Forster deposed that he had seen it there a few minutes only before the peddler left Mr. Allen's house the evening before; that he saw Mr. Allen go to the chimney-piece and take something bright from it, which he supposed, at the time, to be his spectacles; but going there shortly afterward to lay away a newspaper he had been reading, the dirk was not there, and Mr. Allen did not return to the house while he remained there, which was only for a few minutes after he placed the newspaper on the chimney-piece. It was strange, very, he said, but he could not believe it possible that such a gentleman as Mr. Allen would kill a man *for his money*. The jury whispered and looked very grave.

"Does any one know whether the peddler had any money?" inquired a juror.

"John Glover and Miss Allen paid him money yesterday," said Forster.

His pack and person were examined and no money was found. Isaac stated that he now recollected Miss Allen paid the peddler an English guinea, which Mr. John Glover and

his sister examined as a sort of curiosity, and perhaps could identify if it were found. For this the search-warrant was issued. Mr. Simpson said that Mr. Allen told him that morning that he had no change, and wanted to get some to pay the peddler. The jury brought in a verdict of murder against Edward Allen. The coroner issued his warrant for his apprehension, and a search-warrant for the guinea was issued by a magistrate who was present at the inquest. The guinea described, with other specie not described, was found in Mr. Allen's desk by the sheriff.

The magistrate before whom Mr. Allen was carried for examination committed him to jail, and the examining court, a few days after, sent him on for trial to the jail of the Superior Court of the district. Conscious of his innocence, he now was fully aware of the imminent peril in which his life was placed by the strong chain of circumstantial evidence that was presented before the committing magistrate. He saw no probability of escape from the danger that menaced him but from the voluntary confession of the real assassin, whoever he might be—a thing most improbable, and not to be expected. The suspicion of some black conspiracy against him flashed across his mind. His own dirk had been used, and the handkerchief which he knew had been in his pocket that evening was found near the dirk, where he had not been during the day. He knew that he could not have lost it out of his own yard. None but John Glover, Isaac Forster, or the peddler himself could have come into the possession of the dirk and handkerchief. Miss Glover, the females of his own family, and Uncle Tom, he could not entertain the slightest suspicion against. He believed it utterly improbable, too, that John Glover, so well disposed, open-hearted, and friendly to his family and himself, could be concerned in so foul a crime.

His suspicions settled down on Isaac Forster. But he was entirely at a loss to conjecture any adequate motive which that man could have for the commission of such crimes against himself. His first strong prejudices (shall we call them?) excited by Ben Bramble had been nearly effaced by the kind and friendly conduct of Forster. Could it be possible that all these seemingly kind actions had been preconcerted parts of a premeditated plan of treacherous villainy? Could it be

possible that Ben Bramble's estimate of Forster's character was correct? That this wealthy, respected, popular, industrious man was a villain of the deepest dye—a fiend in human form? But what possible motive could urge him to the commission of such horrible crimes? What could he gain by them? What end would be gained, what passion gratified? This was a mystery which Mr. Allen could not fathom; a labyrinth out of which he had no clew to guide him.

After the departure of her father with the officers of the law, Mattie threw herself on her knees, and poured out her heart in fervent supplications to the God of all mercies. With what earnest entreaty, with what pathetic words did she address His throne of grace! With what powerful appeals did she approach the cross of her bleeding Savior, and cry for mercy—mercy to her father, her unhappy and oppressed, but innocent father, and his enemies, who imagined evil against him, and the murderers of Job Terry!

She arose from her knees, and laid herself down on her bed. There she remained till the dusk of the evening, when she was roused from a state of dozy stupor by Uncle Tom's voice at the door of her chamber. He said:

"Massa John Glover an' Miss Mary ain't at home; but de ole gemman give his compliments, an' say he will send 'um up tirecly dey cum home to-morrow."

"Very well, Uncle Tom, it makes no odds; you and Charlotte are with me, and I'm not afraid with you in my father's house."

Mattie arose, put on her bonnet, and walked down to the river in front of the house. The distance was not more than a hundred paces. She crossed the road running by the yard gate, and parallel to the river. The smooth, shady bank of the river was her favorite promenade; scarcely an evening passed in which she might not be seen walking there, either with a book or flowers in her hand. Though it was getting rather dark to read, the Bible which she had in her hand when she lay down was still pressed to her bosom as she walked along.

Uncle Tom busied himself about the supper-table, hoping to induce her to eat something. When his preparations were concluded, he went out through the gate to call her to supper.

But on looking toward the river, he could see nothing of her. He called, but she did not answer. He then walked briskly down to the bank. The river was still full and muddy, from recent rains in the mountains; but as the stream had fallen several feet, the margin was soft and slippery. There was barely light enough to distinguish small objects a few yards off. He had scarcely reached the bank when he saw one of her shoes near the edge of the water on the steep inclined plane, and above it the impression of having slipped down from the top of the bank; and just below, her bonnet was dangling in the water, caught by the pliant branches of a willow drooping over the stream where it was at least ten feet deep.

The old man uttered a loud cry, and plunged into the water. Again and again rising to the surface, and struggling against the current, he sought to find her in the deep water under and around the bonnet; at last, quite exhausted, he with difficulty reached the bank, and crawled up it with the bonnet in his hand. As soon as he had recovered breath to speak, he began to utter loud cries. Charlotte heard him, and ran down to where he was; and Mr. Simpson, who was riding down the road, galloped to the spot. He saw at once, on getting down, the wet bonnet and the shoe, and the few incoherent and interrupted words of the afflicted old man told the melancholy tale. Again this faithful servant threw himself into the water, and dived down. He came up so exhausted that Mr. Simpson with difficulty drew him up on the bank when he reached it.

"It's all in vain, Uncle Tom," said he; "this swift water has carried her body far away. It will never be seen again near this place."

Charlotte and Mr. Simpson could hardly get him to the house. His lamentations manifested his great anguish of heart. They placed him on the steps of the porch, where he sat wringing his hands and weeping aloud. Suddenly he rose to his feet, as if recollecting something, and cried out:

"I must go to massa. Oh, I must go to massa."

"No," said Mr. Simpson, with a tone of authority, "you shall do no such thing, Thomas. You must stay here and take care of his house and property till he returns, or your

young master, Harry. I am going where your master is, and will let him know all that has happened. God bless the poor gentleman, even if he were guilty, which I don't believe; the law will never do execution on him—the death of his daughter will kill him. Thomas, you must stay here; and the moment Master Harry arrives, you must send him to his father."

Mr. Simpson then took Charlotte aside, and charged her not to leave the old man out of her sight till his grief abated, and to find something constantly for him to do. He then gave her some general instructions about the care of the property, advising her to get one of the hired men, in the morning, to go and ask old Mr. Glover to come over to see Uncle Tom, and to advise him what was best to be done. Mr. Simpson then rode away.

The next day, Mr. Allen, in prison, received the intelligence of the sad fate of his daughter. We dare not intrude on the sorrows of his soul, much less shall we attempt to say how deep and dreadful they were. What he felt and what he suffered then can be known only to the Searcher of all hearts.

The report of the murder of Job Terry, the arrest of Mr. Allen, and of the death of his daughter, spread all over the country; and the opinions of the people were as much divided as to his guilt or innocence (so strong was the evidence against him, and so favorable the sentiments of the people in regard to his character) as they were about the remote cause of his daughter's death. Most persons attributed it to accident, but not a few to a design, by suicide, to end her sorrow for her father's fate. This was a more favorable construction than that she had committed the act to avoid the shame of his condemnation, to which others did not hesitate to attribute it. Others put a still more cruel construction on it—that she had drowned herself to avoid the necessity of giving evidence against her father.

All these surmises reached his ears. However much he was afflicted and overwhelmed by his own position and the intelligence of his daughter's death, he entertained not a doubt, for one moment, as to its cause or manner. He felt assured that it was purely accidental, and considered any other

supposition an unjust and cruel indignity to her memory. He was spared the pang that even a doubt on that subject would have added to a heart already overburdened with its heavy weight of woes.

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## CHAPTER X

### HARRY ALLEN'S EXPERIENCES.

WE left Harry Allen in company with Captain Richard Terrell, at the mouth of Big Sandy. After leaving the tavern at that place, they passed through the rough, hilly country, to Little Sandy, and thence to Tigert's creek, a very uninviting section of the new State, except to mineralogists, geologists and botanists. Onward they traveled to the waters of Licking river, seeing very little change in the general aspect of the country, at that time a continuous forest, unbroken except by clearings of an acre or two surrounding log-cabins few and far between. Sandstone, iron ore, indications of coal and salt, presented themselves to their eyes. Mr. Terrell expatiated with all his enthusiastic eloquence on the prospective value of these elements of wealth, utility and convenience; but Harry began to despair of finding in Kentucky the El Dorado of Eastern emigrants.

"Have patience, my dear young friend," Mr. Terrell would say to him, when giving utterance to his feelings of disappointment. "These hills and rocks are but the bone and sinew of the State; we shall soon see, to your admiration and delight, the flesh and blood, the bloom and beauty of Virginia's eldest and fairest daughter."

After passing Mud Lick, where there is as great a variety of mineral waters as at any other spot upon the globe, the appearance of the country began to change. They were on the edge of the great basin of the dark and bloody ground. The next day's ride brought them into the Elk-horn paradise—unsurpassed in fertility of soil and beauty of surface by any country in America, perhaps in the world. They stopped at the house of Mr. Hubbard Taylor, the friend of Mr. Terrell,

an early settler in Kentucky from the Old Dominion, a gentleman "who derived the patent of his honors from God." Harry was in raptures with the country, and delighted with the frank reception which they received from their kind and hospitable host.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Terrell, after supper, "this young gentleman, friend Taylor, is the son of a friend of mine, who has come out to this country to ascertain the value of his father's lands, and to see them. From the only information received about them, they are supposed to be London surveys, not worth a stiver, which I take to be all a mistake, or something worse. You know the character of lands in this section well, no man better, and can give him the information desired."

"What surveys are they?" said Mr. Taylor; "I know of none in this neighborhood in the name of Allen. Where do they lie?"

"Permit me, sir," said Harry, "to show you the papers, for I know so little of such matters, that I might mislead you by verbal statements;" and he took out and handed a bundle of papers to Mr. Taylor, who, after casting his eyes over several of them, which he selected by the labels on them, said:

"Hoho! They are the lands, I see, lately held by Smith and Bird, Buchanan and Alexander; a Mr.—let me see—Forster, yes, that is his name, I think, was their agent—a sharp fellow, but a rascal, I believe."

"That is the name of the man, sir," said Harry, "from whom we have derived our only information in relation to these lands."

"Well, what does he say of them?" said Mr. Taylor.

"Why, sir, he has represented them as almost valueless, worth nothing, and he pays my father a forty-dollar horse and the taxes for the rent of them and other lands besides."

"Pray, young gentleman," said Mr. Taylor, "if it is no secret, what did your father give for these lands?"

"Oh, sir," said Harry, "it is no secret; my father very unwillingly became the owner of these lands; they were the only property conveyed to him by those merchants of

Alexandria, in repayment of sixty thousand dollars which he had paid as an indorser for them."

"Sixty thousand dollars, young man; why, it's the best bargain your father ever made. Those parts of your father's lands that I have often seen, and am well acquainted with, in Bourbon and Fayette alone, are worth double the money."

What a load was taken from the heart of Harry!

"And Forster pays what," continued Mr. Taylor, "for the yearly rental, did you say?"

"A forty-dollar horse and the taxes. But his lease is out this fall. He has repeatedly applied to my father to renew it, and to continue him as the agent; but he has declined the propositions of Mr. Forster, in consequence, I believe, of some hints given him by an honest, shrewd hunter in our neighborhood, formerly a soldier under the command of Captain Templeman."

"Ben Bramble, I guess," said Mr. Taylor, "who saved Templeman's life; as brave, honest and kind-hearted a man as any west of the Alleghany."

"Or anywhere else," added Mr. Terrell. "I know the man well; he was once with Forster in this country, carrying the chain for him; the most dauntless, intrepid, active hunter I ever knew; as true as steel, and as tender-hearted as a woman. What he says of his own knowledge may always be relied upon as certainly true; my life on the honesty of that man, place him where you will."

"Is it possible," inquired Harry, "that Forster can know the value of these lands?"

"Know!" answered Mr. Taylor; "why, he knows as well as I do—better. He's been on them twenty times; has tenants on them, who pay him high rents in horses, cattle, corn and money."

"Now I know Mr. Isaac Forster," said Harry, solemnly, "to be an unmitigated scoundrel."

"Come, come," said Mr. Terrell, who was lying on his back on the floor, making the children, who were crawling over him, cry by the relation of pathetic anecdotes, of the dangers, conflicts, hairbreadth escapes, and deaths of men, women and children during the early settlements of the



quiet habitations east of the mountains. The Indians had roused them up, and kept them wide awake in the breasts of all those who sought their fortunes or fixed their residences west of the Alleghany Mountains.

They passed on to Frankfort, situated in a deep hollow on a bend in the Kentucky River, surrounded by wooded hills, and there spent a delightful day or two.

From Frankfort they passed on to Louisville—thence to Beargrass valley, where Mr. Terrell conducted Harry to see his father's lands in that neighborhood, which he found to be exceedingly valuable. When, at length, Harry turned his horse's head homeward, it was with feelings of gratitude and respect, and a lively sense of the generous hospitality of the many friends and acquaintances which he had made in Kentucky.

In passing through Louisville on his return, he met with a Mr. Anderson, a land-agent of extensive business and accurate information, who gave him all the remaining facts which he needed in relation to those tracts of his father's land in Kentucky which he had not seen; and through his agency he sold a small slip of land in Jefferson for a considerable sum, all paid in gold.

It was on the fourth day of July, that Harry Allen, elate with joy, the bearer of glad tidings, approached New Hope, on the Great Kanawha, after a long day's ride. He had seen nothing of Mr. James Dixon, the reason of which may be as well told now. That worthy had trailed him and Mr. Terrell to Lexington; there he learned that they had gone to Louisville. He had been delayed by false intelligence received at the Mud Lick that two gentlemen, answering the description of these gentlemen, had gone down Licking toward Newport; and knowing that Slocus intended to go in that direction, he was thrown off their track, and did not arrive at Lexington till they had left.

On Harry's return from Mr. Terrell's toward Lexington on his way home, he learned that a man calling himself Charles Lamb was killed the day before in riding a quarter race near the town. His horse ran out of the course, and fractured his skull against a tree. From papers found in his pocket-book, it was probable that his real name was James Dixon, and that

## HARRY'S RETURN.

he was rather more of a wolf than a lamb. From the description of his person given by these gentlemen, Harry had no doubt that it was Dixon, whom he knew as a great horse-dealer and jockey. But he was little aware how much he was indebted to the sugar-tree that terminated the mortal race of this man.

When Harry got within a mile or two of his father's house, he said, to himself :

"This is the glorious day on which the independence of my country was declared, and this shall be the day on which the restoration of my father to independence shall be declared. What a pleasing coincidence—and my sister too. Ah! Victor, you will obtain a jewel of price in that girl sister mine! She deserves the best and bravest in the land. And Helen, too—my own dear Helen. Get up, my good horse Caligula, we don't go fast enough. I never wished for wings so much in all my life."

He had two thousand dollars, all in good gold, in his saddlebags, the purchase-money of the slip of land sold in Kentucky. He leaped from his horse, and seeing Uncle Tom sitting on the steps of the porch, he ran forward and cried out :

"How d'ye do, how d'ye do, Uncle Tom?"

The old man returned no answer to his joyous greeting.

"Any thing the matter, Thomas?"

No answer but sobs and grasping his hand with a trembling and convulsive energy.

"Good heavens! what is the matter?"

Still receiving no answer, he rushed past the old man into the house. It was silent—all silent. Charlotte was sitting in the doorway of the entry, her head hung down and her face concealed in her hands. He trembled violently, and his heart beat fearfully.

"In Heaven's name, Charlotte, what has happened? Where are my father and sister?"

She raised her eyes, streaming with tears, and said :

"Oh! Master Harry, try to bear it."

"Bear what?" he could scarcely utter.

"Miss Mattie is—is drowned!"

He staggered, and supported himself against the door.

"And my wretched, heart-broken father, where—where is he?"

"'Twas grief for him, sir, that made her so weak, poor thing, that she fell in the river."

"My father dead too? Merciful Heaven! Why could not I—"

"No, Master Harry, he's not dead, but—"

"But what? Keep me not in this agony, Charlotte; tell me all—tell me all."

"In prison, sir, for—for killing the peddler, Job Terry."

Harry started as if a bullet had struck him.

"For killing the peddler! It's a base, infernal lie! My father never committed a crime in his life—never thought of such a thing. It's a horrible, deep-laid conspiracy to take his life."

Most fortunate for the young man, at this moment, was this turn of thought. The blood returned to his face; he breathed more freely. He was nerved by indignation and anger, and they neutralized the sharp agony of his grief. He ceased to support himself by the door, and stood erect and firm, as he said:

"When did all this happen?"

"Yesterday, sir; all happened yesterday."

"When was the peddler killed?"

"The night before, sir. He was here selling things to Miss Mary Glover, and Miss Mattie, and went away just at dark."

"Who else was here on that day, Charlotte?"

"Nobody, sir, but Mr. John Glover and Mr. Forster."

"What time did Forster go away?"

"Directly after the peddler, sir."

He strode to the front door and said:

"Thomas, this is no time for giving way to grief—to that grief which God only knows how much we feel. *Iron*, Thomas, *iron* we must be now. Bring me a fresh horse—the best on the land—instantly. My good old man, be quick—be quick. Help to save your master's life from the demons that would destroy him."

"Thank God a Mity you come; only say, Massa Harry, de Lord's will be done."

"Amen, Thomas, amen! Hurry—hurry, Uncle Tom."

He threw the powder out of the pans of his pistols, examined them carefully, and primed them. The old man had in five minutes transferred his saddle and saddlebags to another horse, and Harry was in full gallop to the county jail. We will not attempt to describe the interview between him and his father. He was in the jail nearly all night, yet before daybreak he was on the way to Eastern Virginia. He did not wait for the action of the examining court; both he and his father foresaw its result. He went to Virginia to obtain the evidence of his father's high character, to employ the best counsel, and to settle up all his father's unfinished business there. He as well as his father, was convinced that Isaac Forster was the prime, if not the only mover in this foul conspiracy. His dishonesty, hypocrisy and falsehood had been clearly demonstrated to them by the discoveries of Harry, in relation to the value of the lands; and his motives for conspiring against the life of Mr. Allen began to be clear as noonday.

When Ben Bramble, who had been out of the neighborhood on a hunting expedition, returned, and heard of the death of Job Terry, the imprisonment of Mr. Allen, and the drowning of Mattie, he was struck with amazement, grief, and horror. He could neither eat, drink, nor hunt. He went immediately to the prison, and was permitted to converse with Mr. Allen. We do not know what passed between them, but from the prison he went to Mr. Allen's house, and remained there. He was continually walking about without apparent end or object, or sitting down fondling his dog, young Kate; and when he would rise to resume his restless walks, the signs of his wo could be seen in many a tear that had fallen on the head of the hound. The poor animal seemed to share her master's sorrow. She would often look up in his face, and whine piteously; go hunting about in the rooms of the house for Mattie, and then come out and howl, or run whining to her master, and back again into the house. Sometimes, after sitting down and looking fixedly at the ground for fifteen or twenty minutes, Ben Bramble would rise up suddenly, as if in a great hurry, clench his fists, swing his arms about, and walk backward and forward as if every thing depended upon the quickness of his pace. Then he would suddenly stop, and mutter to himself.

"It's that devil's doing, I know it is. Hell-cat! He'll git it yit—he will—he shall—I say he *shall*. Thar's a God in heaven—yes, thar is. Thar's lightnin' thar. The wicked can't pervale forever. Tain't in the natur of God's mercy—I say it ain't." And then he would stamp his foot on the ground, as if he was crushing the head of a snake.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TRIAL AND THE MYSTERIOUS APPEARANCE.

THE case of Edward Allen made great noise throughout the country, and the excited curiosity and interest of the people filled the village of Lewisburg to overflowing with anxious spectators. The examining court had sent him on to the jail of that place for trial at the October term. Mr. Allen had prepared for the worst, anticipating the probability of his condemnation to death upon the gallows. Never did a dutiful, devoted, and affectionate son make greater exertions for a father. Indignantly repelling the idea of the guilt of his father for whose principles he had unbounded respect, Harry took every precaution suggested by the able and learned lawyers whom he had employed, to guard against any indirection, advantage, or conspiracy which might be developed in the course of the trial. They had advised him studiously and cautiously to avoid the expression of any suspicion of conspiracy or design against the life of his father by any person whatever, and especially by Forster, whose whole conduct in relation to his father and sister Harry had communicated to them, and his artful and dishonest conduct in relation to the lands. Confident of his father's innocence, notwithstanding the strong chain of circumstances that had led to his arrest, Harry seemed to grow more confident every day that his father could not be made to appear guilty, or be condemned for a crime which he had not committed.

On the 17th of October, George Arbuckle Templeman came to Lewisburg, the bearer of a letter to the judge. One of

the judges was known to be sick and unable to attend. The 18th of October arrived. The grand jury were empaneled and sworn. The judge delivered his charge, and they retired to their room. The commonwealth's attorney sent to them papers and witnesses, and in an hour they returned into court an indictment against Edward Allen for the murder of Job Terry—a *true bill*.

Harry immediately left the court-house, and in a few moments returned with the petition of the accused. The judge ordered the sheriff to have the prisoner brought into court. The room was crowded in every nook and corner. Every bench was filled; every place in which a man could stand was occupied. The window-sills and doorways were blocked up with spectators. The open area beyond the bar was a moving mass of human heads. All were uncovered; and the expressions which marked the countenances of the individuals composing the crowd were as various as their ages, conditions, and habits. The vacant stare, the keen, searching glance, the mild and pitying eye, the contracted and stern frown, the reflective and dispassionate look, and the smirking, silly smile, could all be seen in close proximity.

Forster, who had returned from the grand juror's room, was seated on a window-sill not far from the judge; one of the deputy-sheriffs and another young man occupied seats beside him. There was no noise, and only a low, indistinct murmuring sound could be heard.

The crowd were seen moving and parting at the door, and the voice of the sheriff was heard saying, "Make way, gentlemen, for the prisoner." All eyes were turned toward the door and a breathless silence pervaded the hall. Slowly, but with firm and steady steps, Edward Allen approached the back of the bar, with the sheriff on one side and the jailer on the other. His manly face was marked by an expression of deep thought, yet his brow was smooth, his lips uncompressed, and his eyes clear and serene. He was dressed in deep mourning. When he reached the back of the bar, he made a profound obeisance to the judge. A moment after, the judge said:

"Edward Allen, one judge can not proceed with your trial unless on your petition to be brought to trial; do you make that petition?"

"I do sir," replied Mr. Allen.

"Sheriff," said the judge, "place a chair for the prisoner."

His whole appearance and demeanor were strikingly those of a gentleman, in the proper sense of that term. He took the seat offered behind his counsel.

After the usual legal formalities were all gone through, the petit jury empaneled, not one of whom the prisoner challenged either peremptorily or for cause, the indictment read, and he had pleaded "Not guilty," it was remarked that Mr. Allen's senior counsel looked for a moment at Isaac Forster, and then, with a very significant, but hardly perceptible smile on his lip, whispered in the ear of the prisoner.

The attorney for the commonwealth then arose and made a few prefatory remarks on the nature of the charge and the evidence, the importance of minute circumstances as connecting links in presumptive evidence, and concluded by calling on the jury to bear in mind the solemn oaths they had taken to weigh well the testimony and decide on the guilt or innocence of the accused according to the law and the evidence. "Whenever a crime," said he, "has been committed, it is the interest of every good citizen that it should be detected, and the perpetrator punished. Yet the punishment of the guilty is not more to be desired than the acquittal of the innocent. I should be unworthy of the place which I occupy if I did not, in the discharge of my duty, attempt to bring the guilty to punishment; yet in this, as in every other case, I should rather rejoice that the accused should be able to establish his innocence. In all cases, if one or the other is to be the result, it is better that the guilty should escape than that the punishment of guilt should be inflicted on the innocent."

The junior counsel for the prisoner merely remarked that he and his colleagues had no remarks to offer till they heard the evidence against their client, the accused, and would only now say to his honor the judge, and the jury, that he believed the indictment would not be sustained by the evidence, and that the accused would be certainly and honorably acquitted.

The evidence of the finding of the body of Job Terry, the time, place, and circumstances, and all that happened at the inquest that could be legally introduced, was first brought before the court. These are known to our readers, and it is

unnecessary to recapitulate them. James Simpson was then called to the book, and sworn. The attorney for the commonwealth said: "Tell the court and jury, Mr. Simpson, what you know of this case."

The witness said:

"I know nothing about the murder of Job Terry. Mr. Allen came to my store on the morning of the first of July last, and asked me to give him change for a twenty-dollar note, saying that he had no change, and expected to see Job Terry shortly, to whom he owed some seven or eight dollars, and wished to pay him."

"Did you give him change?"

"No, I did not; I had none to spare."

"How far do you live from the prisoner?"

"About a mile and a half above."

"What time of day was it when the prisoner came to your store?"

"About ten o'clock in the morning."

"How long did he stay?"

"Not more than fifteen or twenty minutes."

"I understand you to say, Mr. Simpson, that you gave the prisoner no change?"

"I did say so."

"Will you state what the prisoner said when you told him you had no change to spare?"

"He said he had tried to obtain it wherever he thought it could be had in the neighborhood, and could not get a dollar, and that he should make no further effort; that Job Terry would have to wait still longer for his money."

"I am done with this witness, gentlemen," said the attorney for the commonwealth, addressing himself to the prisoner's counsel.

"We have no questions to ask," observed Mr. Randolph, addressing himself to the judge, who said:

"You may retire for the present, Mr. Simpson."

John and Mary Glover were sworn.

"Mr. Glover, stand a little back, and face the jury."

The commonwealth's attorney beckoned to the sheriff, and requested him to hand to John Glover a piece of coin in his possession.



"Mr. Glover, will you look at that piece of gold, and tell the court and jury what you know about it?"

Glover said: "My sister and myself went on a visit to Mr. Allen's on the second of July, after dinner. While we were there, Job Terry came in. Mr. Allen invited him to sit down, which he did, taking off his pack and setting it down on the floor. Mr. Allen then said to him, 'I'm sorry, Mr. Terry, I have not in change what I owe you, but as you are going down the river toward *the Point*, you must call on your return, when I hope I shall have it ready for you.' Mr. Terry answered—"

"You need not state what Mr. Terry said," interposed the commonwealth's attorney.

"We have no objection, your honor, to this witness, or any other, stating all the conversations and circumstances *in his own way*, believing that we shall best obtain in that way the whole truth, and relying upon your honor to instruct this intelligent jury as to the legality of all the statements—to inform them what is and what is not legal evidence for or against the prisoner at the bar," said Mr. Walker, one of the prisoner's counsel.

"Go on, Mr. Glover," said the judge.

"Mr. Terry answered Mr. Allen by saying," continued the witness, "'It makes no odds, sir; I did not call for that, but to see if I could not sell you or the young people something this evening.' Miss Mattie, the poor young lady that was drowned, then said, 'As soon as you are rested, Mr. Terry, open your little store; I want a few articles.' Just then, Mr. Allen walked out of the room. When the pack was opened, Miss Allen bought several articles, and my sister a shawl, or, rather, I bought the shawl, and gave it to my sister. After they were done dealing, Miss Mattie said to Job Terry, 'Here is an old English guinea; give me the change if I am entitled to any.' He took the guinea, examined it, and said, 'We don't often come across these yellow boys out here: a good guinea, of good weight.' He poised it on his little finger, and said: 'I should know it among a thousand, from this mark upon the edge.' Seeing me look curiously at the coin, he handed it to me, and running over the articles Mattie had bought, said to her, 'Your change, Miss, is six shillings; the

articles come to twenty-two shillings. Here is your change—much obliged, Miss.’ I examined the piece of gold, and so did my sister, who then returned it to Job Terry. I paid him for the shawl. He handed them a handsome box, out of which I believe they bought some other articles, which I did not see. He then collected his merchandise, which was scattered on the floor, put it in his pack, and closed it. Soon after that my sister and myself left Mr. Allen’s, on our return home.”

The commonwealth’s attorney inquired: “Did you leave Terry the peddler there?”

“Yes.”

“What time in the evening?”

“Just about sunset.”

“Look at the piece of gold; is that the same guinea or piece of gold paid by Miss Allen to the peddler, Job Terry?”

“I believe it is.”

“Why?”

“From the marks on it.”

“Hand it to the jury that they may examine it themselves and judge if its identity can be established by any marks on it. Were any other persons present?”

“Mr. Forster was sitting in the porch, reading a newspaper.”

“Was Harry Allen there?”

“No; he was not at home.”

“Any questions, gentlemen?” inquired the commonwealth’s attorney.

“None,” replied Mr. Walker.

“Miss Glover, will you tell us what you know of this piece of money? Take it and look at it.”

She looked at the coin, but her eyes were suffused with tears; she trembled excessively, and could hardly speak so as to be heard.

“It seems to me—I believe it is—I can not say it certainly is—you have heard what brother has said—”

“Did you see Miss Allen pay Mr. Terry a piece of gold?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did you hand it to him after looking at it?”

“Yes, sir. I did.”

"You may retire, Miss Glover."

She did retire, supported by her brother, and sobbing bitterly.

"Swear the sheriff. Tell the court and jury, sheriff, how this piece of money came into your possession."

"When my duty compelled me to arrest the prisoner on the evening of the third of July, he was sitting in the porch reading. He seemed much astonished. I then showed him the search-warrant. He handed me his keys. I searched his desk, and found in a secret drawer ninety-five dollars in silver and this piece of gold."

"Why was a search-warrant issued?"

"It was stated at the coroner's inquest that Miss Allen and John Glover had paid money to the peddler, Job Terry, the evening before, at Mr. Allen's, and there was none found in his pack or on his person."

"Are you certain that the piece of gold shown to the court and jury is the same that you found in the prisoner's desk?"

"Yes, I am; it has been in my possession ever since."

"Where is the rest of the money found in his desk?"

"Here in this bag."

"Set it on the clerk's table. Stand aside, sir. James Simpson, we must trouble you again," said the commonwealth's attorney. "Open that bag, look at the money in it, and say if you recognize any of the pieces in the bag."

Simpson went to the clerk's table, examined the money, and said:

"Here is one piece which I know. It is a counterfeit."

"Well, sir, what do you know of it?"

"On the first of July, Job Terry was at my store—complained of having been pestered all the way from Waynesborough by base coin—showed this one. Mr. Forster and myself doubted whether it was a counterfeit, and told him we should think it a good dollar; to convince us he took a file and made this notch in it. He said it was different from any he had seen."

"Did he say of whom he received it?"

"Yes—of Mr. Samuel Carter, at the falls."

"Where is he?"

"I do not know; it is reported that he is gone back to

## PETER GAINS' TESTIMONY.

Old Virginia, having received a letter informing him that his father was ill—not expected to live.”

“Well, sir, what became of that dollar after it was filed and ascertained to be a counterfeit?”

“Job Terry put it into his pocket, and said he should keep it to show the people, to guard them against the like.”

“You may stand aside. Sheriff, was that bad dollar with the notch filed in it found by you in the prisoner's desk?”

“It was, and all on the clerk's table.”

“Swear Peter Gains.”

He was sworn and said: “When crowner was a-settin' on the dead body of Job with the jury, I was thar. Mr. Forster was a owin' me a small matter, and he axed me to take a walk one side. Says he to me, says he, ‘Peter, let's take a walk.’ So I gits up, hopin' he was gwine to pay me that four-and-sixpence he had bin owin' me since—let me see—last Christmas—no, I'm wrong—last New Year's day, as well as my memory sarves me. So we walks off down toward the river, and as we turned round the big rock, I sees a hanky-cher a stickin' on a brier 'bout a foot and a half, or a leetle under or over, from the ground, jest as if the brier had caught in it, stickin' out fashionable-like from the pocket, and jerked it out as some one was a passin' by. ‘Bless me,’ says I, ‘here's a hankycher,’ says I; and I stept up to take hold on it, but I stumbled agin a rock, and as I rekiwered I was nigh fallin', I tell ye. I see'd somethin' a shinin' in the dirt, and stoopin' down, I picked up this dirk that's a lyin' thar by the hankycher on the table. It was all dirty and bloody—I was scared monstrous bad, and so was Mr. Forster, I reckon. ‘My God!’ says he, ‘Peter, this is a bad business.’ ‘Jest so,’ says I; ‘this must be the dirk that killed Job.’ So we fotch 'em right back to the men that was settin' on the body, and I told 'em all 'bout it, didn't I, Mr. Crowner?” The coroner nodded his assent. “Think I didn't forgit to give Mr. Forster a hint 'bout the four-and-sixpence—that I did; it went clean out of my head.”

The handkerchief and dirk were then shown to the judge and the jury. The former was of white, fine linen cambric, and marked on the corner, “*Ed. Allen, No. 7.*” The dirk was a costly and beautiful instrument—the handle of mother

of pearl, richly inlaid with gold, on which were engraved the letters "*E. A.*"

Mr. Wickham, of counsel for the accused, arose and said : "In order to save the time of the court, we do not mean to deny that these articles are *the property* of Mr. Allen ; therefore, no proof need be adduced on that point—we admit the fact."

"Very well, sir," said the attorney for the commonwealth. "Have you any questions to ask Peter Gains?"

"None, sir."

"You may stand aside, Mr. Gains. Swear Isaac Forster, clerk. Well, Mr. Forster, proceed with your testimony in this unfortunate affair."

"Truly unfortunate," said Forster, "and I am very sorry that my oath compels me to say any thing about it. I've always been the friend of the *murd*—prisoner, I mean."

"Speak it out, Mr. Forster—*of the murderer, you might say, sir.* It would be true you are *his friend*," said Mr. Wickham, in a voice the clear silver tones of which were distinctly heard in every part of that crowded room. "Your friendship for my client has nothing to do in this matter. We want the facts—the truth, sir—the whole truth."

"Perhaps," said the attorney for the commonwealth, "as Mr. Forster desires to say nothing more than he is compelled by his oath and the law, if it meets with no objection from you, gentlemen of counsel for the accused, and your Honor (addressing the judge) will permit, we may best obtain his evidence by propounding interrogatories."

"We have no objections," said Mr. Randolph. "Proceed with your questions, sir."

"Mr. Forster," inquired the commonwealth's attorney, "were you at the prisoner's house on the second of July?"

"I was."

"What time of day did you arrive there?"

"About eleven o'clock."

"Had you business with him?"

"A small matter of business. I held a note of his, assigned to me, for thirty dollars."

"Did you visit him with the view of collecting *your* money?"

"Partly."

"Did he pay you?"

"No; I told him I wanted specie, and he said he was sorry he had not a dollar of specie, and not enough in notes to pay me at that time."

"What time in the day did this conversation take place?"

"Before dinner; I suppose about one o'clock."

"You said the collection of the note was *partly* your business. What else, Mr. Forster, brought you to the prisoner's house?"

"It was a pleasant place to visit at. I had been often there, was well acquainted with the family, and liked their society."

"Were you acquainted with his daughter?"

"Yes; that young lady that was, unfortunately, drowned, or, when her father was arrested, committed—I mean to say, may have drowned—"

"*Committed self-murder*, you mean; speak it out, sir," said Mr. Wickham.

"She," continued Forster, "was a very agreeable young lady, and I—take great pleasure in the company of young ladies."

"Did you hold any conversation with her that day?"

"Yes, I may say I did, of a private and delicate kind, which I do not wish to repeat."

"You are not bound, Mr. Forster," said the judge, "to repeat it."

"Well, sir, did you see her after dinner?"

"Not till after Mr. Glover and his sister came in."

"Did you converse with her?"

"I did not. I took a seat in the porch, to read a newspaper."

"Did you see Job Terry there?"

"Yes; the young ladies were dealing with him."

"Could you see them?"

"Yes; the door was open, and they were not ten feet from me."

"Did you see any money paid, and by whom?"

"By Mr. Glover—silver dollars, and a piece of gold by Miss Allen."

"Look at that dirk, Mr. Forster. Did you ever see it before the day on which the coroner's inquest was held on the body of Job Terry?"

"Yes; I have."

"More than once?"

"Yes, sir, often."

"Where?"

"On the mantel, among other curiosities, in the prisoner's sitting-room?"

"When did you see it there?"

"Several times."

"When did you see it there last?"

"Late in the evening of the second of July."

"After Mr. Glover and his sister had departed?"

"Yes."

"Was Miss Allen in the room?"

"No; she had left the room."

"Did any other person enter the room before you left the porch?"

"None except the prisoner. He came in through the adjoining room, walked up to the mantel, and took something bright from it—his spectacles, I supposed—and went out."

"Was the peddler there?"

"No; he had gone just before."

"How long?"

"Two or three minutes."

"Were you in that room afterward?"

"Yes; about ten minutes after Mr. Allen left the room I went to put the newspaper on the mantel, where I found it."

"Did you see the dirk there then?"

"No; it was not there."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I did not see it in the place where it was lying before."

"Where do you suppose it was?"

"I do not like to *suppose*, sir, against a man's life."

"You are not bound to answer, Mr. Forster," said the judge.

"Did the prisoner return, or did you see him after that?"

"I did not see him after that, for I stayed not more than a minute or two."

"Was it dark?"

"No; only getting so."

"Did you take leave of any of the family?"

"No; Mr. Allen was not in the house, and Miss Allen was in her own room, I presume. I mounted my horse, that had been brought out at my request some time before, and rode away."

"Any questions, gentlemen?" inquired the commonwealth's attorney.

"Not now," replied Mr. Walker; "we may wish to ask Mr. Forster a question or two presently."

Isaac Forster went back and resumed his seat on the window-sill, where the two gentlemen with whom he had been sitting made room for him. The prosecuting attorney said:

"The evidence on the part of the commonwealth has all been heard, I believe, and I do not wish to make any comments on it until I hear the evidence on the part of the accused, if, indeed, there is any. My brethren of the bar, of counsel for the prisoner, have pursued a course novel and unaccountable to me. The prisoner, acting, doubtless, in accordance with their advice, made no challenges; and they, perfectly aware—no lawyers can be more so—that much that has been said by the witnesses is not strictly legal evidence, have opposed no objections, asked no questions, and cross-examined not a single witness. The case really seems to me of the gravest aspect—awfully plain, and I am entirely at a loss to know how they mean to shape their defense. Have you any witnesses, gentlemen?"

"We have," replied Mr. Randolph, "and the gentleman will soon be enlightened as to the course we have taken and the nature of our defense. May it please your Honor," continued he, "we ask the indulgence of the court for a few minutes. Some of our witnesses are travel-worn, and we did not wish to subject them to the annoyance of a crowded court-room till their presence should be necessary. They are in town, and will be here in a few minutes. Sheriff, call Edward Templeman, at the door, if you please. Our principal witnesses, sir are ladies."



It was observed that when Mr. Randolph remarked that the witnesses were ladies, Isaac Forster turned pale, started, and looked anxiously toward the door. The sheriff had hardly returned to his seat, when the stately form of Edward Templeman was seen entering the hall. His head was uncovered, and his thin, gray locks were waving over his broad and high forehead.

The "stormy multitude" parted before him as he slowly advanced. On his arm leaned a female in deep mourning, whose face was entirely concealed by her bonnet and a long black veil. Close behind them walked Harry Allen, with another lady in a close riding-dress, whose face was also covered by a veil. As they approached the spot where the prisoner sat, he arose from his seat. In an instant the veil was raised, the bonnet fell to the ground, and as she threw her arms around the neck of the prisoner and cried out, "Oh! my father! *my father!*" there burst forth from the astonished multitude in every part of the hall the exclamation:

"It is his daughter! it is his daughter! Great God! has the grave given up its dead to save him?"

It was indeed his daughter. Her long, disheveled hair had fallen in thick volumes on the shoulders of her father, and displayed to all the face of Mattie Allen. The tears that fell fast from her eyes were not the only tears that were shed in that vast assembly. On every side sobs and sighs, and sounds of sympathy were heard. Even the venerable form of the judge was bent forward till his head rested on the table before him, and his whole frame was agitated by strong emotion.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE CONFEDERATES' SECRET REVEALED.

WE need not inform our readers that Mr. Allen was not unprepared for this affecting meeting with his daughter, whom he had believed dead till a day or two before his trial; and we must now reluctantly leave the court-house and the trial to account for the mysterious appearance of Miss Allen at this critical conjuncture.

Ben Bramble, the week before the trial of Allen—which he resolved to attend, believing him to be innocent, and determined to render him every assistance in his power—set out with his friend and ally in woodcraft, Nat Colly, to hunt on toward the ferry, and thence to Lewisburg. He said he “hated to speak evil of any human creature, but, to save Allen’s life, he meant to tell them as tried him all his mind about Zac Forster, who, as he had learnt, was the main witness agin him. I’ll prove him onfit to give evidence agin a man that’s got more goodness and honesty in the eend of his little finger than Zac Forster’s got in his whole carcass, if it was as big as big Sewell Mountain. Nat, you’ve see’d him take out and put in links in his surveyin’ chain when he thought nobody was lookin’ at him?”

“Yes, I have,” replied Nat.

They made their way to the ferry-house, where they stayed all night. Hearing there that signs of a large bear had been seen making up the river on the other side, they recrossed very early on Thursday morning, and passed up by a route unusual even to hunters, hoping to fall in with the bear. Ben’s dogs, Captain, Rover and Young Kate, like their master and his companion, were very willing to rest after having explored the cliffs of New River, and its ivy-covered ravines, for some ten or twelve miles.

Ben and Nat had seated themselves on a fallen tree on the side of a high, rocky hill, some fifty feet above a small stream that passed in a deep, narrow gorge along the western base of the hill. Captain and Rover were coming up the stream,

smelling on the bushes, and stones, and logs. Kate had cut across the hill, as a near way, and was soon at her master's feet.

"Poor thing," said Nat, looking at the young hound, "she's mighty down-hearted, not findin' nothin' even to bark at in these hills."

"That's not it," said Ben; "she's been takin' on and mopin' like, that poor hound has, ever since Mattie Allen was drowned. When I go to Allen's she moans like a human cretur—hunts all over the house and garden for her, and then comes to me whinin' and whimperin' like a child. She'll never be no profit in the woods. I can't be mad with her nor scold her for it, 'kase Mattie Allen and this poor slut was monstrous intimate and lovin'. She'd lay her head in her lap and look up in her face by the hour, while Miss Mattie would pat her head and smooth down her ears with her soft, white hand. When we was thar, she always would feed Young Kate herself out on a yearthenware plate, the same as if she had been a human. When she found out (and she was sure to find it out, as a farmer's old dog does when he's gwine to kill a beef) that I was goin' to Allen's, away she'd go before me, friskin' and frolickin' all the way, and git thar afore I was half-way. But when I'd come away, she'd hang back and whine, like a humorsome, spoilt child gwine to school."

"What's got into her now?" said Nat; "here she comes like mad."

Young Kate dashed right up to Ben, leaped upon him, whining and wagging her tail, and then darted back again up the side of the hill, looking back at him, evidently inviting him to follow her. After running about thirty yards, she stopped suddenly, thrust her nose into the ground, then leaped into the air, waving her tail and erecting her ears, and making the most extravagant antics. Both the men arose to their feet.

"Stop, Nat," said Ben. "Don't budge a foot, but keep these old dogs quiet. Let me go and see what Kate's arter. She's either gwine mad, or thar's some deviltry, somethin' unnat'ral thar."

Ben approached the spot. Kate had scratched away the

moss, and there was a crevice in the rock, to which she was applying her nose. Ben kneeled down and put his ear to the fissure, and then his eye. Nat observed him in this position for at least ten minutes, every now and then raising his clinched fist in the air, and shaking it furiously. Nat's patience gave way, and he cried out: "Why, what's got into you and Kate? What tarnal nonsense is this? Both runn'd mad, I b'leve."

Ben turned his head instantly toward Nat, and made a sign of silence and danger with his hand. He then took Kate in his arms, with his hand on her mouth, and crept back as softly and stealthily as if life depended on the silence of his tread. When he reached Nat, he set his teeth hard for half a minute before he spoke a word, and then he said:

"Of all the infarnal villyans and devils that God lets live, Zac Forster is the beat. That poor gal that we all thought was drowned and in heaven, is here under ground, in a cave, put thar by him. It's as true as you and I are mortal sinners, Nat Colly. I heard her and another woman as plain as you hear me. Kate's diskivered the rascal's den. He ain't in it—I heard 'em say so. But we'll fix him, as sure as you ever kilt a rattlesnake. Nat, jest go and listen."

Nat's eyes dilated with astonishment as he said:

"Ben, I'm sorter joubous. *Ar' you sure* they war humans you heard? Maybe, now, it's somethin' onnat'ral—some of the devil's deceptions. Thar's strange things in these mount'ins."

"I tell you, Nat, it's nothin' but man's devilment, and no mistake—I could see 'em, too, and I smelt fried bacon, plain."

"Did you?" said Nat. "Then I'll go—my rifle's loaded, anyhow. But do you keep a sharp look-out, Ben; and lend me that long knife of yourn—mine ain't long enough to make daylight through any oncommon critter, if so be I git into a scrimmage with one."

Nat strode away to the place, looking around in every direction, and every now and then stopping to listen. Ben seated himself on the tree and watched him, still holding Kate in his arms, who struggled violently to get away and follow Nat to the crevice in the rock. After a short time Nat returned.

"It's as true as preachin'," said he. "She's down thar,

and another woman tellin' her if she don't marry Forster afore Monday, her father will swing on the gallows. Thar's a man, too—I heard his voice. He said: 'It's too late now—Forster's gone, and Allen swings to a certainty. You'll not see Forster till that job's done. The trial's on Monday, you know, Polly McCloud.' Well, Ben, don't this beat everything you ever heard on?" said Nat.

"I tell you what it is," replied Ben, "we must diskiver the mouth of this cave, and I'll manage the rest pretty quick. How fur is it from here to Squire Templeman's?"

"About seven miles across the hills, I judge," said Nat, "and eight or ten round; I can git thar in an hour and a half, or two hours at the furdest."

"Well," said Ben, "the way to the mouth of this devil's den must make up somewhar out on this branch; thar must be some travelin' to it—some signs to track the devil to his hole as well as a *b'ar* to his'n. Captain and Rover knows when I'm on a trail, and it's ther business to foller me, and keep ther mouths shot as well as I do; they'll keep quiet. But poor Kate's in such a takin' I shall have to carry her in my arms, with my hand on her mouth, or she'll be sure to make a fuss. Here, Nat, take my gun, and keep a sharp eye to the left-hand side of the branch."

They went down to the little stream opposite the place where they had been sitting, and walked in the water down the ravine till they were nearly opposite the crevice discovered by Kate, and nearly fifty feet below it.

"See here," whispered Ben: "a shoe-print in the sand, goin' down the holler."

"Stop, Ben," cried Nat, scarcely above his breath; "here's a path under these ivy bushes right above my head, goin' out of the branch, and slantin' up the hill; and I can see the same track in the path. Take your rifle, and I can crawl on all fours up the hill and see whar it leads to."

In less than five minutes Nat was seen coming down the hill backward, like a bear down a tree; after getting near to Ben, he turned, and came into the branch at the same point from which he had ascended.

"It's all right," said he. "The mouth is up thar under that rock, covered up as close as a bird's nest—about the

'cutest fixin' you ever see'd. I kotch a glimpse of the man this time. He was settin' noddin', with a gun across his lap and a lamp lit behind him."

Ben knew that his comrade's information was entirely to be relied on when nothing unnatural was suspected which might disturb his senses, and he plainly perceived that all apprehensions of that kind had been dissipated by what Nat had seen and heard. His plan of operation seemed to have been arranged in his mind, for no sooner had Nat informed him of what he had seen than he said, in a whisper :

"You or I must stay hid on this hillside, near enough to kill any thing bigger than a miuk that can go in or come out of that cave. T'other must be off to the squire's to git a s'arch-warrant and a possum of men to git here afore night, or if in the night, with lights, to be lit arter we surround the mouth up thar."

"I'll go," said Nat, "and be back with men, squire or no squire, by two hours' sun."

"Just tell the squire," said Ben, "all we've see'd and hearn, and swear to it for me and you too, if *he says so*. For he's the right sort of a man, head and heart, liver and gizzard—I've see'd him tried. Bring the Vandals and Huffs, and take the dogs with you, and be sure to bring 'em back, too; for if any man in that cave breaks by us, Captain and Rover, if I tell 'em, will take his track same as any other varmint. The old dogs will foller you, and I'll carry Kate out on hearin' of this place, then put this string round her neck, and she'll foller quiet. Leave the guns with me. Tell the squire you want a s'arch-warrant for a stolen 'oman and the thief—and that's wuss than for stolen goods, I s'pose."

This arrangement was no sooner agreed on than it was put in execution. Ben returned, and took his station where he could see any thing that should pass the mouth of the cave and within fifty feet of it, but so carefully concealed that one might go within a yard of him without being able to see him.

Nat had hardly passed three miles over the hills when he struck the road leading to the falls, and saw at some distance behind him Charley Vandal riding briskly up to him. He soon overtook Nat, and cried out :

"Why, what's the matter, Colly, that you are all dogs and no gun to-day?"

"Come up, Charley, I've got news for you, my boy."

"What's that, friend Colly?"

"Ben Bramble and I have found a varmint's den, that we are afeard to enter without a s'arch-warrant and a possett, and I'm gwine to the squire's for the warrant, and boys enough to hold the old one a scuffle, any how."

"You don't say so! Nat, I'm your man for that sport, by jolly. Where's Ben?"

"Watchin' the den twell I git back, with his gun and mine too."

"Then there is the devil to pay in earnest, Nat; for nothing in these woods, nor nowhere else, I believe, ever drove Ben back with one gun, or no gun, either."

"He's made out on straight-grained timber, I know," said Nat, "well enough."

"But the squire ain't at home, Nat; he's at our house; this is warrant-trying day."

"So much the better," said Nat; "it is nearer than his house, and we can git the men thar right off on the ground."

They were soon at old Mr. Vandal's, and Colly, who was well known to Squire Templeman, stepped up close to him, as he was seated at a table, having a few books and papers before him, and said:

"Squire, not to interrupt you, one word, if you please, by ourselves. It's no small warranting matter, sir."

His looks and manner told to this old soldier and excellent magistrate that something of consequence was to be communicated. He rose from his seat, and they stepped aside. Five minutes afterward Squire Templeman called his constable, and said:

"Summon a posse of twelve men; see that they are well armed, and ready to go with me in half an hour. Adjourn the court."

The men, who were in little groups in the house, around the door and in the yard, were all wondering what was the matter. Conjecture followed conjecture in quick succession. The squire's conference with Colly being ended, he stepped

up on the door-sill and called the attention of the men. They crowded around him, and he said :

"My friends and neighbors, most of you have been soldiers or are the sons of soldiers, and know the necessity of secrecy and silence when the object is *to catch the enemy napping*. A hiding-place of rascals, violators of the law, has just been discovered, and *they must be taken*. Now let me advise all of you who do not choose to accompany me this evening to go quietly home, and to say not one word of this matter. For if the report gets out that they are discovered, those in the place will arm and defend themselves, causing bloodshed in taking them, and all the rest of the gang who happen to be out will hear of their comrades being taken, and make their escape instead of falling into the trap that will be set for them. Be silent as death, or you will cause a very bad man to escape the punishment he deserves, and the murder of innocent persons, whom the villains now hold in confinement."

There was whispering among the men when Squire Templeman ceased to speak, and one of the men then said :

"If so be your worship will allow, we'll all go with you."

"Very well ; load rifles, saddle horses, and let's be off—we've no time to lose."

In fifteen minutes the constable said :

"All ready, sir."

"Lead on, Nat Colly," said the squire.

There were fifteen men. They soon reached the head of the ravine in which flowed the rivulet that passed by the mouth of the cave. Here they alighted, and tied their horses out of sight of the little, scarcely discernible path leading down, and mostly in the water. Squire Templeman then explained to them the state of the case, and gave them his orders. Four men stayed with the horses and watched the ravine, with directions to take any man or men who might attempt to pass them. The rest followed Nat Colly, in Indian file, down the ravine. Not a word was spoken, and even the dogs, Captain and Rover, crept along as if they knew a surprise of something was meditated.

The mouth of the cave was surrounded by the men, at the distance of twenty paces. Ben Bramble crept out from his lurking-place, came up to the squire, and said :



"The devil ain't at home, yer honor—here's his den—but one of his cubs is, and that poor innocent gal, Allen's darter, that to all appearance was drowned. Shall I haul him out?"

"Yes, you and Charley Vandal and Nat Colly. There may be more than you suppose. Be ready, boys, to rush in and help them if need be. Here are the lights."

Ben had hardly moved a stick of the brushwood concealing the entrance, when a low voice within said :

*"What's the time of day?"*

"The right time to catch varmints," said Ben.

*"The hell it is!"* and a rifle-ball from within grazed Ben's cap, and the report, with stunning reverberation, rung through the cave.

In rushed Ben, closely followed by Nat and Charley. They had not advanced five steps into the cave when they heard a violent scuffling on their right, and the choking sound of a voice, in half-stifled tones, exclaiming: "Take 'em off, the d—d dogs—they'll kill me." The worrying, low growls of the dogs, Captain and Rover, mingled with the choking sound of the voice.

"That's the time of day, is it?" said Ben, darting to the spot, and releasing the man from the hold of his dogs, who, unperceived, had entered under the brush and seized the man in his low, narrow place of concealment. "It's well you gin up so quick," he continued, dragging the man into the light, "or Captain would have stopped yer squallin' in no time, though you ar' an uncommon varmint. Here, boys, s'arch this critter; maybe he's got claws, that he'll be tryin' to dig into some on us. Thar, that'll do; deliver him to the squire."

As soon as the man reached the mouth of the cave, and saw it surrounded by armed men, he turned pale and shrunk back.

"Hello! mister," said Ben to him, "if you don't want to stretch some of them hickory saplings with that neck of yourr, make straight answers to what I'm gwine to ax you. How many ground-hogs are in this hole?"

"None but women."

"Whar's Zac Forster?"

The man turned his scowling eyes on Ben, and said :

"D--n him, I don't know."

"When was he here?" The man hesitated. "Take him to the squire," said Ben.

As soon as the man saw Squire Templeman he hung down his head, and said :

"I see it's no use ; the game's up. It's all Forster's doing, squire, as I hope for mercy."

"When will Forster be here?" inquired Squire Templeman.

"Not till after the trial on Monday," was the reply.

"When was he here?"

"Yesterday night."

"The squire, looking the man full in the face, said :

"You can only hope for mercy, Joe Swinton," (the man trembled at the mention of his own name), "by confessing the whole truth. Where are the rest of your gang?"

"Some in Kentuck and over the Ohio, and some with Forster."

"When will they be here?"

"At no set time—just as it happens—as they can."

He stopped short and the squire added :

"As they can pass off the counterfeit money. Make a clean breast of it, sir. I shall see what's in this cave, you may be well assured. Where are the tools?"

"Here," said the man, pointing to the cave.

"Very well, we shall see," added Squire Templeman.

While these things were taking place at the mouth of the cave, a very different scene was enacting within. The old woman, who acted the part of cook and housekeeper in the den, hearing the sound of the gun and the scuffle of the dogs with Joe Swinton, had thrown a bar across the door of a small chamber separated from the broad, downward avenue in the cave by a partition of plank, and was crouching down with her ear near the ground, listening with breathless eagerness. Mattie Allen had thrown herself on a low truckle-bed, where she sat trembling, anxious and alarmed, yet with some glimmering of hope that the disturbance might not be a broil among the vile inmates of the cave, which had happened more than once since she had been its unwilling and unhappy tenant. "Oh! if it is discovered!" thought she; "but if not, prepare my heart, heavenly Father," she said aloud, "for

the trials that await me, and oh! remember—remember my father. Oh my God, have mercy on him in his heavy afflictions.”

“Always a-praying,” muttered Polly M’Cloud, the old woman. “What good does that do? You’ll never pray yourself out of *this* place, nor your father out of Greenbrier jail till he swings, if you don’t come to, and marry Isaac Forster before he’s sentenced.”

“Never, never!” said Mattie. “Cease, I pray you, this hateful—Heavens! what is that?”

The voice of Ben Bramble was heard saying to Young Kate, who was scratching and whining at the door, “Ah! Kate, you are a faithful critter. She’s in thar. You shall soon lick her hand, and show her the way out on this cussed den.”

At the sound of his voice, Mattie, with one leap, reached the door, wrenched the bar from the hasp, and fell senseless at the feet of the hardy hunter, whose tears fell fast as he bent over her pallid, grief-worn face.

“Poor innocence! it’s overcome her quite,” said Ben, as he took her in his arms and laid her on the bed. “Bring some water here, you old devil’s darling, or I’ll make you uglier than you are.”

“Brandy’s better, sir,” replied Polly M’Cloud.

“For sich as you; bring water, I say,” exclaimed Ben, “and sprinkle her face, or I’ll give you sich a sprinklin’ as will cool all the brandy in your carcass.”

Kate had crept up on the bed, and laid her head upon Mattie’s arm. As the old woman approached to sprinkle the face of the fainting girl, Kate rose up and snapped at her hand, growling furiously. Ben snatched the water from her, and while performing an office to which he was all unused, looking first at the reviving girl and then at Kate, he said:

“Them as says dumb critters has got no sense and fellow-feelin’ don’t know nothin’ about natur’. Lie still, Miss Mattie,” continued Ben, as he saw her open her eyes and look wildly around, while the affectionate hound nestled up to her and licked her arm. “You are safe now.”

“And my father?”

“Safe too, undoubtedly, my dear young lady,” said Squire

Templeman, who had entered the cave, "since this most foul and wicked conspiracy has been brought to light by the hand of Providence."

"Heavenly Father! I thank thee," said Mattie, raising herself on her knees, and stretching her hands and directing her eyes toward the heavens, from which she was shut out; "and oh! that thy blessing—thy richest blessing, may descend on those who have been thy instruments in saving us from the wiles of the wicked. Oh! sir—oh! my dear Ben Bramble, take me from this horrid place. *He* will come with his bad men, and—and—you do not know how desperately wicked he is."

"Be composed, Miss Allen; make yourself perfectly easy on that score. We have stout hearts and unerring rifles enough around you to defy fifty Forsters, and to shield you from every danger. You shall soon be under the shelter of my roof—Templeman is my name."

"Thanks sir, a thousand thanks, Mr. Templeman. But tell me to what or to whom, under Providence, do I owe this signal and timely deliverance?"

"There stands the man," said the squire, pointing to Ben Bramble, "to whose prudence and courage you are indebted."

"I can't take it all to myself, squire," said Ben. "You and them brave boys, Charley and Nat Colly in particular, and, *more than all*, *Young Kate*, has been God's instruments in this thing. She made the first diskivery—she did. She told Nat and me, as plain as a dumb critter can speak, that Miss Mattie was here onder ground. That's the raal truth of the case. *Young Kate rescued her*. She'd never have come to light if it hadn't bin for this hound—that is to say, humanly speakin'."

Here Ben related the circumstances of the discovery as they occurred, to the astonishment of the whole party, who had collected in the cave, with the exception of the guard stationed at its mouth. Squire Templeman now proceeded to explore the cave, leaving Ben Bramble and Charley Vandal with Mattie, who insisted on going out immediately into the open air. She often declared afterward that it was impossible to describe, and scarcely possible to conceive, the sensations

she felt on seeing the heavens, the sun, and the objects on the earth after having been shut out from them for more than three months. She had seen nothing, during all that time, but objects under ground by the feeble light of a lamp. The glare of the sun was intolerably dazzling; every object looked large and bright, as seen through a solar microscope; and the air felt so light she almost thought it was lifting her up from the ground. To breathe it, was a positive, perceptible enjoyment, like tasting a delicious fruit. The autumnal woods presented a panoramic picture of God's own painting, so vivid and distinct that she wondered at and admired it, as she supposed one translated to a newly-created and more beautiful world would wonder at and admire it.

Squire Templeman passed down the main passage of the cave, and soon came to a large open space, fifty feet wide and a hundred or more in length before it became narrow again, and the roof was a dome thirty feet above his head. Here he found provisions for a dozen men, sufficient to last them three or four months, and arms, guns, swords, pistols and knives. Broken bottles, glasses, and playing-cards were scattered on the floor of solid rock. A long table ran half way through this room; toward the further end, on each side, were truckle-beds or pallets on a plank platform; beyond these, on one side, three feet above the floor, was a strong door fixed in the solid rock, constituting the side wall of the cave. There was a very large iron-guarded keyhole in this door.

"Here," said Templeman, "we shall find some of the secrets of this cave. Joe Swinton, where is the key of this hole?"

"Forster keeps that himself."

"Very well, my men, we can easily open it. Give me a tomahawk."

"Here's an ax," said one of the men; "we found it under the old woman's bed."

The door was forced, and within there was barely room for a large, strong box of wood, which, when drawn out, was found to have filled the whole cavity, and was itself nearly filled with papers, neatly arranged in bundles and labeled.

"Let us pass on," said the squire; "this is not all. Swinton has a department of his own in this thieves' palace. He well knows that I am informed of the trade at which he

works. This is not the first time I've had to do with that gentleman. Lead on."

The cave became narrow and low, and descended steeply to the right. Here, at the bottom of a flight of rude steps, they arrived at another door, which Swinton seemed unwilling to approach.

"Where's the ax?" said Templeman—"unless Swinton can find the key."

There was a pause of some seconds, when Templeman, looking sternly at Swinton, said:

"Surely you are not fool enough to suppose that any thing you can do or refuse to do will prevent me from seeing and searching that room, and every hole and cranny in this cave."

"The key's under that stone of the third step," said Swinton.

The door was opened, and the lights presented a strange spectacle. Furnaces, sand, coal, moulds for melting, crucibles, screws, bars of metal, dies, punches, bank-note plates, a workbench with a great variety of tools and several books; shelves with bags of spurious coins, a quantity of bank-note paper of different textures and qualities, and bundles of finished counterfeit notes; vials and bottles of acids and other chemicals, and in one corner a wardrobe and gentleman's toilet, both of which were well furnished. There was no avenue beyond, but a tube with flexible joints was discovered entering the wall. On examination, this was found to be an escape pipe for smoke, which could be adjusted to any of the furnaces. On returning to the mouth, the sides and floor were carefully examined, but no other apartment or avenue could be discovered in the cave. It was thoroughly explored.

The contents of Forster's box, the arms, and, indeed, every thing transportable on horses, were put into the emptied bedsacks—tools, money, and all—and the whole party marched out. Seven men, commanded by Charley Vandal, were left on watch to arrest any persons who might come to the cave. They were to be relieved the next day. Joe Swinton, well secured, was mounted on a horse, with a strong arm behind him. Polly M'Cloud was placed behind one of the men, and Mattie rode behind the squire. The other men carried the

articles found in the cave on the horses of the men who were left on watch, and away the party went, and arrived at Squire Templeman's just as the sun was descending below the western horizon.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### LIGHT AT LAST.

ON the arrival of the party at Squire Templeman's, he took proper measures for the safe-keeping of Joe Swinton and Polly M'Cloud, and for the refreshment of the men. He held a sort of council of war with Ben Bramble and four or five of the men who had served under him in the army, and two or three active young men were sent off that night in different directions, with letters and verbal orders. His daughter Helen, filled with sympathy, exerted herself, by the kindest words and the tenderest assiduities, to render Mattie comfortable. Every thing on her toilet and in her wardrobe was placed at her disposal with the most cordial, sister-like and unostentatious kindness. To her inexpressible joy, Mattie learned from Helen the safe return of her brother from Kentucky, his conference with his father, his journey to Virginia, and his return; the discovery of the character of Isaac Forster as a land-agent, the sale of a little piece of land in Kentucky by Harry, and the great value of her father's lands, which Isaac Forster had represented as worth nothing.

"How in the world," said Mattie, "did you obtain all this happy news? They may be only reports, dear Helen. I am almost afraid to believe them, lest they should prove untrue."

"Oh, they are true," replied Helen, blushing deeply "Your brother called here on his way to Virginia to see papa on business."

"Ah! Helen," said Mattie, "my brother keeps no secrets from me, and I know very well that the greater part of his business here was with a certain Miss Helen Templeman, whom he loves better even than this poor sister of his. Don't

break out the teeth of that comb, dear Helen, but help me to untangle my neglected hair with it."

Helen threw her arms around Mattie's neck, and they wept together, but not bitter tears. When they came out to supper, their faces radiated with their great joy.

After supper, Squire Templeman retired to his chamber, and before day, his son George was in the saddle on the road to Lewisburg with the following letter to Judge ——, an old schoolmate and intimate friend of Templeman, who, the squire knew, would be one of the judges of the Superior Court, the session of which was to commence on the Monday following :

" October 14th, '99.

" DEAR JUDGE : One of those signal interpositions of Providence, which are thought to be happy accidents, has just disclosed to us one of the most foul and base conspiracies that ever disgraced a civilized country. Miss Allen, the daughter of Mr. Edward Allen, now in jail at Lewisburg, accused of murder, whom we all believed to have been drowned accidentally on the evening of the day on which her father was arrested, is now in my house, rescued from a cave discovered by Ben Bramble, a hunter, an old and excellent soldier of mine. And who, sir, do you imagine, could be the villain to plan and execute this outrage? No other than *Mr. Isaac Forster*. The plan was to induce her to marry him, in order to save the life of her father, and to cover the frauds of this precious villain as a land-agent, by his becoming the son-in-law of the man whom he had deceived in regard to the value of large landed estates, and whose life he had put in jeopardy. Indeed, it is very doubtful, from a forged will made for Mr. Allen found among Forster's papers in the cave, if he had succeeded, through the fears of the young lady for her father's life, in inducing her to marry him, whether he would not still have sacrificed the father in order to insure success to his ultimate design, the possession of the immensely valuable landed estate of Mr. Allen. But Miss Allen, with unparalleled fortitude and constancy, supported by her unshaken dependence on her God, withstood all his threats, and rejected all his proposals. And this is not all. In his den we found the notorious Joe Swinton, the counterfeiter, with all his tools and



apparatus ; a large supply of provisions, arms, and counterfeit money, and a box of Isaac Forster's papers, which prove his frauds and develop his designs. Who could have imagined that honest Isaac Forster was the captain and controller of this gang of thieves? Yet so it is. I have secured Joe Swinton and an old woman, Polly McCloud, who, it would seem, has been the dupe, drudge and victim rather than the accomplice of these men. There were none others in the cave except Miss Allen when it was discovered ; but I have taken measures which, I hope, with your coöperation, will succeed in apprehending the rest of the gang.

" I send a warrant for the arrest of Forster ; but, with all due reference for your better judgment, an old soldier would suggest that it would be better to have him watched day and night by confidential persons, to prevent his escape, and not to give him the slightest knowledge of what has transpired, or that his villainy is known. Some of his associates in crime are no doubt with him, or within his call, and if he were arrested they would instantly fly—escape themselves and give notice to the others that their den was discovered, and thus all of them would escape the hands of justice. Forster himself is one of the principal witnesses against Mr Allen.

" Would it not be best to let him play the play out as a witness, till it comes to the last scene, that it may be thoroughly understood what he is, and then arrest him? I will certainly be ready, in the neighborhood of Lewisburg, on Monday, with Miss Allen, Joe Swinton, Polly McCloud and Ben Bramble, to appear in court during the trial, so soon as Forster's testimony shall have been given. In regard to communicating these facts, and that his daughter still lives, to Mr. Allen and his counsel, I leave the time and manner to you, sir, confident I could not confide in an abler head or a better heart. I should put the most important facts in this letter in the form of an affidavit, if I did not know that you will rely on any statement made by

" Your old friend and obedient servant,

" EDWARD TEMPLEMAN.

" P. S.—I inclose several letters and papers for your inspection. My son George will hand you this, who will bear

to me any communication you may be pleased to make. You will recognize the handwriting of the inclosed letter, signed Samuel Carter, ship-marked Liverpool. "E. T"

"To Judge —, *Lewisburg*."

The letter alluded to in the postscript of Squire Templeman's letter, read thus :

"LIVERPOOL.

"How is this, Isaac Forster? Have I been made the dupe as well as the instrument of your infernal wickedness? If so, you shall pay a heavy reckoning. When I embarked for this port, I carried on board several newspapers, which I did not read till out at sea; among the rest the *Alexandria Gazette*, in which there is an account of Job Terry, the poor peddler, whom you made me believe that I had unfortunately and unintentionally killed by a blow on the head with my cane. So he was stabbed in two places, and these caused his death, says the coroner's inquest, and not the blow on the head. Thank God for that! It takes a heavy load from my heart. Intoxicated, and angry as I was at his accusing me of passing counterfeit money knowingly—which you well know I received from you—as God is my judge, I had no intention of injuring him seriously, much less of taking his life. You have done this deed of murder, Isaac Forster; for I know the man was dead before we left him, and you urged me to fly for my life, which I did, till I put the ocean between me and the officers of the law, who, I believed, would soon be after me. Little did I think that you had urged me on to chastise the peddler for his insolence, that you might take his life in the dark; but I see it all now, plain enough. And that worthy, good gentleman, Edward Allen, near whose house the deed was done, has been arrested for the murder! By the eternal God! if a hair of his head is touched, and I live to reach America, I will visit upon you the vengeance you so richly deserve. I know that I have been a wild and dissipated scapegrace, but not the villain you take me for, or would make me. So, beware, Isaac Forster, of one who now knows you. SAMUEL CARTER."

The judge, after reading these letters, communicated their contents to Mr. Randolph, one of Mr. Allen's counsel, a gentleman distinguished as much for legal ability and eloquence

as for courteous manners and all the social virtues. He visited Mr. Allen in the jail, and communicated to him the joyful news of his daughter being alive and in safety, and the certainty of his own acquittal. It was thought best that the commonwealth's attorney should know nothing of the discoveries, that the trial of Mr. Allen might go on, in order to develop the conspiracy, detect all those concerned in it, and to bring them and the counterfeiters to justice. Hence the extraordinary course of Mr. Allen's counsel in the trial.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE TRAGEDY AT THE CAVE.

AFTER Miss Allen's deliverance, we need not say how much it cost her to restrain her impatience to fly to the arms of her imprisoned, unfortunate father. Yet she did restrain it. The kind magistrate offered to her reason sufficient motives to restrain the impulses of her heart. He convinced her that it was all-important, not only to the arrest of the counterfeiters and of Isaac Forster, but to the honorable acquittal of her father, that the discovery of the cave, and her rescue, should be kept secret till the trial came on, and all the evidence against him had been given, and Isaac Forster should be in the court-room when she made her unexpected and sudden appearance before the judge and jury. She therefore remained at Squire Templeman's till Saturday morning, when, under the protection of the squire, and accompanied by his daughter Helen, she commenced her journey to the neighborhood of Greenbrier court-house. The old soldier did not intend that she should enter the village or be seen till the proper moment arrived, and he had made arrangements to that effect. The sheriff had been at his house on Friday night.

Joe Swinton and Polly M'Cloud, masked and guarded, had been sent in the night to the neighborhood of Lewisburg. Ben Bramble would have accompanied them, but he and Nat

Colly, with some ten stout mountaineers, were ordered by the sheriff to relieve the party at the cave, and then Ben and Nat were to follow the squire and Miss Allen in the evening. Before his departure for the cave, Ben went into the room where Mattie and Helen were sitting. Stepping up to Mattie, and taking her hand, he said :

"Keep a good stout heart, Miss Mattie. The devil's sure to git his own in the long run, 'specially them as courts gals agin their will, onder ground, or onder any kiver that ain't the honest, fair thing. I'll see you agin Monday in Lewisburg, *if so be I live.*"

Then turning to Helen, he said : "I know you'll take care of her, honey ; she's mighty like her brother, ain't she ?" Helen blushed to the tips of her fingers. "Well, well, don't mind me, Miss Helen, but keep Miss Mattie movin'. It's the best truck for low sperrits that ever I tried—better nor any doctor's means ; I've tried it often, and I can sweat out more meloncholy walkin' arter the varmint in these hills than ary steam doctor in Old Virginny."

"Good-by, dear Ben," said Mattie ; "keep yourself out of danger for my sake, who owe you so much, if not for your own."

"Danger ?" said Ben ; "God's everywhar. Them as sarves him is never in danger. You warn't in no danger in that ar' cave, though you mought think so, and your daddy's in no danger in Greenbrier jail. He that made this hound puppy," said he, pointing to Kate, with her head in Mattie's lap, "can deliver you, can bring him, your father, out as cl'ar as a whistle. Kate's yourn, honey ; I give her to you to remember me by ; she valors you all but as much as I do. Good-by t'ye, my darters."

So saying, Ben walked away, followed by his two dogs, Captain and Rover. Kate had scarcely left Mattie's side since her rescue, and when the young ladies retired to their chamber at night, she insisted on staying in the room, and Helen actually had a pallet prepared for her near the bed in which she and Mattie slept. We must now leave them and the squire setting off to Greenbrier, and follow the relief-party to the cave.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Nat Colly to Ben, "it's my notion that if these sneakin' rascals don't come to this den of

thern to-day or to-night, they'll never come arterward. Mr. Allen's trial's on Monday, and the evidence of Miss Allen and the rest that wer found thar will be known everywhar. Some on 'em will hear on it, and will know that ther lurkin' place has bin diskivered, and they'll make tracks like a wolf with the dogs arter him."

"That's likely," replied Ben; "yet I feel as if we was to have a scrimmage with 'em; my mind misgives me, some how, and although the law allows us to take 'em any how, yet we must manage to trap 'em without blood, Nat. I don't want the blood of a feller-cretur on my hands, though he be first cousin to the devil himself."

"Well, nor I nuther," said Nat; "but darn me if they shall git away, if ever we lays eyes on 'em."

"I'll tell you how we can manage it," said Ben. "Let Charley, if he will stay, watch outside with five men, and you and I, and four of the other boys, will go in the cave. One on us will take Joe Swinton's place inside the door by the lamp to give ther watchword—'*What's the time o' day?*'—and the others go further in, out on sight; so that, if so be they should come in, we'll have 'em between two forces; and when we let 'em know that they ar' in that fix, and no mistake, they'll give up without a scuffle."

"Maybe so," replied Nat; "but they are desperate villains, I guess, and I don't like the notion of settin' down in a cave by a lamp; it's too much like watchin' by a corpse—monstrous solumn, I tell ye, Ben."

"Well," said Ben, "I'll take that upon me, and you and the boys can go further in with the punk and the sulphur matches, and the lights that the squire gin us. The minit I kick over the lamp onintentional by design, the boys outside will rush up, and you can then let 'em know that they are surrounded."

The plan of operation was agreed to by the whole party when they got to the cave, and Charley Vandal consented to stay, and go with Ben in the evening. Charley and five others, after the rest had gone in, arranged every thing at the mouth to look as it did when the cave was discovered, and then concealed themselves in the ivy-bushes. Thus they remained about two hours, when the quick ear of one of the

men heard a splashing in the water, and soon after the low murmur of voices coming down the little stream. Then all was still again for a few moments, and four men were seen slowly and stealthily following each other in Indian file up the path leading to the mouth of the cave. When the foremost was within twenty yards of the mouth, he stopped till the others came up, and turning to one of them, said :

"It's no use trying to persuade me, Obed. I'll see Forster in fire before he shall use us so. None of the risk, and half the profits. Of the plunder we've got now, and that we shall get for the last drove sent to Virginia to sell, he shall have his share, and no more ; and if that is measured, Obed Stapler, by the service he does us, it's mighty small. He must bring a wench, too ; old Poll's niece, he tells you. It's all a lie. She's a gentlewoman, I know, and he'll bring danger on us, mind what I tell you."

"But he signs all the notes, and thar's nobody else can do it," replied Obed.

"What of that?" said the other man. "He's planning for himself, I see that ; and if he could make any thing by it, he would hang every one of us."

"Ah! but," said one of the others, who had not spoken before, "he's as deep in the mud as we are in the mire, and he can't sink us without drowning himself."

"The devil he can't!" replied the first speaker. "My name's not Uriah Blixon, if he ain't the williest old fox this side the Alleghany. But I'll watch him pretty close, and if he don't walk as straight as a shingle, I'll put a ball through him some of these days, blow me if I don't. But what's the use of jawing? Let's go in and tell Joe how handily we got off his shiners, and what a fine lot of horses we've sent into the old settlements for sale."

Saying this, he stepped up to the mouth of the cave, and, as he began to remove the brush, received the well-known challenge, "*What's the time of day?*"

"*Four o'clock,*" he replied.

As soon as Ben Bramble saw that they were fairly in the cave, he arose to stumble over the lamp, as had been agreed on. The foremost of the counterfeiters, Uriah Blixon, catching a glimpse of his face as he turned, drew a pistol from his

bosom, and leveling it at Ben Bramble, fired instantly, exclaiming:

"All is up, boys! We are betrayed—this is not Joe Swinton."

Ben reeled and fell, extinguishing the lamp with the blood that gushed from his side, and expired without uttering a groan. In a moment Charley Vandal and the men with him were at the mouth of the cave. He cried out:

"Surrender, or we'll shoot down every man of you."

But the counterfeiters dashed on further into the pitchy darkness of the cavern, the foremost calling out:

"Come on, boys; we can find our arms in the dark, and then we'll give it to the deceiving dogs at the mouth. Jessey, I've fixed one of 'em."

"Will you?" shouted Nat Colly, from the dark recesses of the cave. "Come on, then, like men."

A blaze of light rose up before the advancing counterfeiters, and revealed, not thirty yards from them, a body of men, with rifles at their shoulders, marching toward them.

"We are trapped!" said Uriah Blixon, recoiling, and rapidly retreating toward the mouth of the cave till they reached the body of Ben Bramble.

The party in the cave followed close after them. As soon as Nat Colly saw the body of his fallen friend, and a man, with a pistol in his hand, looking back with a fiend-like scowl at him, he raised his gun and shot him through the head. Uriah Blixon, half-uttering a blasphemous yell, leaped high in the air, and fell beside the body of him he had slain. Twice the ruffian attempted to rise, but he fell back, wallowing in blood. The gurgling in his throat suddenly ceased and he was dead.

"Shall we fire?" cried Charley Vandal.

"Unless they surrender in one minute," replied one of Nat Colly's party.

"We give up," said one of the counterfeiters; "we have no arms."

"March out, then," said Charley.

"Won't you shoot us?" inquired the man.

"No," answered Charley, "if you make no resistance; but I'll put a bullet through the first man that raises his hand."

Follow 'em, boys, out of the cave, and keep your rifles cocked."

The three remaining counterfeiters marched out, closely followed by all in the cave but Nat. They were tied, searched and carried back into the cave. The large torches which had been lighted by the party who secreted themselves in the inner part of the cave had been set up against the walls, and the long table at which the revels of the wild crew who inhabited the cave were held caught fire, and wreaths of flickering flame were curling along the vaulted roof and up the side walls of the cavern. The dark-red glare, accompanied by the fitful, hollow sound of the flames confined in the bowels of the earth, made a sublime spectacle. There lay, in that red and lurid light, the body of Uriah Blixon, his glazed eyeballs reflecting it, and his ghastly countenance still bearing the malignant scowl of hatred and revenge. And there sat Nat Colly, supporting on his lap the head of his lifeless friend. How different, even in death, the expression of that mild, manly face! It was pale and placid as the face of a sleeping infant. Charley Vandal stooped over him and said:

"Nat Colly, is there any hope?"

"No, Charley, he is gone—gone forever. It's all over with him. The life's clean out. Oh! Charley, I loved him like a brother. Thar warn't a braver nor a better man, nor a kinder, truer heart in a human body than his'n. I couldn't see him lyin' here in his blood, and that villain thar, that murdered him, standin' over him with the pistol in his hand, without shootin' him down, as he desarved. I couldn't stand it, and I didn't."

Too true it was, there was no hope. The noble spirit that once animated the body of Ben Bramble had fled forever—to the heaven of heavens, we verily believe—for his humanity, and the desire to spare the effusion of the blood even of the wicked, had cost him his life. Slowly and sadly they bore his body from that fatal cave, and when the light of heaven fell on the faces of his companions, it showed the traces of many a tear that had welted their cheeks for the untimely fate of their friend, in that dreary abode.

Though there is but little outward semblance of tend



and sympathy about rough woodsmen and hunters, they have hearts that feel as deeply and as poignantly both joy and sorrow as do those of the most refined and cultivated. Their perilous pursuits and common dangers—their urgent need of each other's assistance in times of trial—their rude but hearty enjoyments in camp after the dangers, toils and labors of the day—all beget a kindliness of feeling that rarely exists in the same vigorous and lasting degree among the dwellers in towns and cities.

Deeply did Charley Vandal and Nat Colly feel the death of their fallen comrade, and gentler hearts and more refined natures, too, wept most bitterly the untimely and violent death of Ben Bramble.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SCENE IN COURT.

RETURN with us now, gentle reader, to the court-house in Lewisburg. The excitement produced by the appearance of Miss Allen, thought to be among the dead, was so great that the business of the court was temporarily interrupted. When her bonnet and veil fell off, as she threw herself on the neck of her father, Isaac Forster was still sitting on the window-sill. The instant he saw her face he attempted to throw himself out of the open window, but was seized and pinned down to his place by the young men sitting beside him. What pencil can paint, what pen describe the horror-stricken countenance of this man! He was seen to be agitated as Templeman, and those with him, entered the door, and straining his eyes to get a sight of the faces of the females. The men held him firmly by his arms, and one of them said to him in an undertone, "The warrant to take you, sir, is in my pocket." It now for the first time flashed across his mind that he had been watched and guarded by these two men for several days; that, in fact, he had been a prisoner, though at large, and apparently free. The horrible truth, in all its appalling magnitude, now burst upon his soul—

that his guilt, in its great enormity, had been discovered, was known, and that the toils of the law, unseen and unsuspected, had encircled and were ready to crush him, like the coils of the boa-constrictor around the body of a traveler fallen asleep in the woods.

It was impossible to look upon the guilty wretch without shuddering. His trembling shook the very seat to which he was held. His whole face was ghastly pallid, his lips of a leaden hue; his forehead was contracted into knotted cords, and his bloodshot, quivering eyes seemed as if they would start from their sockets as he kept them fixed on Mr. Allen and his daughter. At last Mattie raised her head from her father's bosom, and, with the big drops still falling on her cheeks, seemingly unconscious of all but his presence, she said:

"Oh, my dear and only parent, could you, did you, ever harbor the thought that I had deserted you in your sore distress; that, forgetting all I owed you of duty—all I felt for you of that love which my tongue knows not how to utter—all I owe to our heavenly Father—that I could have lost my faith and trust in Him, and had rushed unbidden into his holy presence? Oh, my father, could you for one moment think that your daughter had been guilty of self-destruction—had thrown herself into the river?"

"Never, my dear child—never. I knew—I felt, that it could not be so. I believed that you had accidentally fallen into the river. In all my afflictions, I have never suffered the pang that such a thought would have cost me. And I have been supported by that arm which has been outstretched for your deliverance and mine, confident if, in the mysterious but all-wise and merciful providence of God, I was to suffer the penalty of the law—an ignominious death—for a crime which my soul abhors, and of which I would not have been guilty for all that this earth can offer, that we should only the sooner meet in our heavenly Father's kingdom, and there find your sainted mother, who has gone before us to that blessed abode."

Mattie turned her face toward the window as if to get a breath of air. Her eyes fell on Isaac Forster; she shrunk back, and exclaimed:

"Oh, take him away! There is the man that dragged me off."

"Yes," said Templeman, losing his patience, and forgetting that he was in the presence of a court of justice, pointing with his finger at Forster, who shrunk back as if it had been a dagger, "*there is the man*—no, not a man—a monster in human form—a counterfeiter—a robber—a murderer—who stole and imprisoned the daughter, and would have hung her father." Before he could say more, the cry arose:

"Haul him out! Tear him in pieces!"

"Sheriff," said the judge, "look to the safety of Isaac Forster; he is in the hands of the law. Let not a hair of his head be touched. Captain Templeman, go to the door and speak to the people."

Squire Templeman's words fell on the ears of the stormy multitude like oil on the troubled waves of the ocean. When he ceased speaking, all were still for a moment. The voices of the people were hushed, and there was heard, "He is right; we wrong." The people were satisfied to let the law take its course. Order was restored, and the court proceeded with the trial of Edward Allen.

A *nolle prosequi* was entered in the case of Polly M'Cloud. She was sworn, and proceeded to give her testimony. In doing this, it was found utterly impossible to confine her to material or legal evidence. The judge and the lawyers were fairly forced to let Mrs. M'Cloud tell her story in her own way.

The material part of her testimony was, that Miss Allen was brought into the cave by Isaac Forster and another man whom she did not know. That Forster made her go out of the room occupied by Mattie and herself several times, and that she, by laying her head against the rock, could hear every word that was said by them. That Forster persuaded Miss Allen to marry him, and said that, by doing so, she could save the life of her father; that her father did not kill Job Terry; that he knew who did, and could clear him if she would marry him; that if she did not, her father should die, and then "she should be his'n any how, and should live and die in the cave."

"Miss Allen," said Polly M'Cloud, "wouldn't hear to him.

I wonder the poor cretur warn't scared into takin' him for a husband, and savin' her daddy's life; for Mr. Forster's a right likely man to look upon, and mighty rich, they say; if he had a-courted me as strong as he did her, I don't know what I should have done but give up. Yit I don't believe in him, and *I has my reasons for it.*"

Miss Allen was then sworn. The judge said to her: "Be composed, young lady, and state to the jury the circumstances of your abduction, and whatever else may be connected with it."

We shall not attempt to follow her through the whole of her touching and pathetic narrative, but will give its brief outlines. She stated that, previous to her father's arrest, Forster had made advances to her that could not be misunderstood; that on the day on which Job Terry, the peddler, was at her father's house, Forster had formally proposed to her; that she had promptly, and perhaps indignantly, rejected his proposals, and requested him never again to mention the subject to her. He seemed to be very angry: "And as I left the room," said she, "he made use of this expression, with a very marked emphasis: 'You will repent this, Miss Allen.' He went away from my father's about the dusk of the evening."

When her father was arrested the next day, she had remained in her chamber till late in evening, and then sought relief to her agonized feelings and fevered frame by walking on the bank of the river, where she was in the habit of walking, in front of the house. She had scarcely reached the bank when she was seized, and a bandage drawn over her mouth and eyes. In vain she struggled and attempted to scream. She was hurried into a boat, and rowed rapidly from the shore. Then the sound of the oars ceased. She heard whispering. The boat seemed to turn round. Her bonnet and one of her shoes were taken off. She thought she felt the boat strike the shore, and immediately afterward she heard the words, "That will do; they'll know she's drowned, or think so, at any rate." Again the oars were rapidly plied. Some person held her down in the boat, and something, which felt like a blanket, had been thrown over her head and shoulders. In a short time the boat struck the shore again, and

there was whispering. She heard the words, "Bring the horses close to the boat." She was taken out and placed on a horse on a woman's saddle, with some person behind her, who held her on; the horses—for she could hear the feet of two—were put in rapid motion, which continued for a long time—several hours, she supposed. Exhausted, and in a state almost of stupor, she was lifted from the horse and placed upon the ground. The horror of her situation was now made known to her by hearing the voice of Isaac Forster as he took the bandage from her eyes and mouth.

"I told you, Miss, that you would repent of your refusing me."

"I screamed," said Mattie, "and he said, 'Scream away, if that will do you any good; none but bears and wolves can hear you in this place.' It was so dark I could not see any object. Forster sat down by me, while the other man kindled a fire. I then saw that I was under the shelf of a large impending rock. That I survived the agonies of that night and the succeeding day, during which they remained there till after dark, I can attribute to the sustaining hand of God alone. My brother far away from home, ignorant of the calamities that had fallen on us; my father in prison, accused of a terrible crime; and I—I was in the hands of ruffians, far from all human help. Oh! sir, no tongue can tell what I suffered. They offered me food; but the very attempt to swallow a mouthful, had I made it, would have choked me. Strange as it may seem, in the course of that dreadful day I slept—I must have slept, for I suddenly felt refreshed, and drank a large draught of water that was offered to me. As soon as it was dark I was again placed on a horse as before, and how long or how far I was carried I know not; it was still dark when I was lifted from the horse, and I think twenty minutes must have elapsed before they forced me along on foot in the water for some distance, and then up a steep hill through thick bushes. Forster then said to me, 'You are at home now.'"

"I heard somebody speak, as if from out of the earth, and then I found myself in a room lighted by a lamp, and this woman, Mrs. McCloud, was sitting on a stool near the lamp. Looking at me steadily for some time, she said:

"'Isaac's a liar; this here gal's a lady. Well, he deceives everybody, even me; he'll get deceived himself some of these times."

"'Trust me for that, you old hag,' he replied, from the outside of the door. 'Mind your own business, or remember.'

"She shook her head and replied to him, 'I hear.'

"'Heed me, then,' he said, 'or you will never see the outside of this cave. You shall never leave it, living or dead.'

"'I know that,' she said; 'you needn't tell me I can't help myself if I would, any more than this poor young lady.'

"I threw myself, or rather fell, on a pallet bed, covered my face, and sobbed aloud. My heart was full to bursting; I could hardly breathe, and felt as if I should suffocate every instant. This woman, who has treated me as kindly as she knew how, I believe, got up and offered me some kind of spirits, saying it would do me good; but I did not raise my head.

"'Well, well,' said she, 'you'll come to it whether or no, I guess; grief and sorrow make mighty thirsty feelings.'

"How long I remained in that room in the cave I do not know. Forster frequently came into the room, ordered Mrs. M'Cloud out, and urged me to marry him, always saying that, if I would, he could save my father's life and free his reputation from the stain that would rest on it; that my father was in his power, but that, if I did not yield to his proposals, my father should die the death of a murderer, although not guilty of the crime; that he knew who killed Job Terry, and meant to make his death answer his own purposes; and that, if I did not agree to marry him in a short time, which he said he gave me for reflection, I should never again see the light of day—should never leave the cave; and, moreover, that he would force me to marry him so soon as I had permitted my father to die, when I had the power to save him by consenting to become his wife. Hard was the trial and sore the conflict, and bitter the thought that my father must die, but I knew and felt that I was not permitted to do evil that good might come of it; that the blessing of God can not rest on actions that he has forbidden, no matter to what end they are performed. I was supported and sustained under all these trials thanks, everlasting thanks to my heavenly Father, till I was

rescued from that dreadful place. How that was accomplished this excellent gentleman," said she, turning to Squire Templeman, "to whom I owe so much, and Ben Bramble, my kind and brave friend, can best inform you."

Her narrative being ended, Squire Templeman stepped up to the clerk's table to be sworn, when the clatter of horses' feet were heard approaching the court-house.

"Make way, make way," was heard at the door, and two young men rushed up the steps and into the hall. All eyes were on them except those of Mr. Allen and his daughter, who seemed to hear and see nothing, so much were they absorbed and overpowered by the intense feelings excited by Mattie's recital. The taller and more robust of the two young men advanced rapidly toward the clerk's table, and said, addressing the judge:

"Danger, imminent danger to the life and honor of a gentleman, my friend, must plead my apology, your Honor, for the abrupt—"

A loud scream interrupted the speaker. At the first tones of his voice, Mattie sprung to her feet, caught a glimpse of his face, screamed, and fell fainting on the floor. In an instant the stranger reached the spot where she lay, and raised her head. Slowly she revived, and rising up, a deep blush suffused her face and neck as she said:

"Oh! Victor, have you come to behold my father's—"

"Yes, dearest, I am here, thank God, to behold your father's triumphant vindication of his life and reputation; I am here to prove his perfect innocence by the most positive and irrefragable evidence. Where is the monster who wove this web of villainy and crime? *Where is Isaac Forster?*"

He pronounced the words with an emphasis so strong, and an intonation so deep and thrilling, and imperative, that the wretched villain started up mechanically, and answered:

"*Here!*"

All eyes were turned upon him. His own were fixed on Samuel Carter, for he it was who had entered the court-house with Victor Carrington. Forster was blasted and withered by the vision. If the earth had yawned and a spirit from the vasty deep had stood before him to drag him down to perdition, he could not have exhibited a more terror-stricken

appearance. His fate was sealed forever. He knew it, he felt it, he looked it; and all who beheld him could see its deep, dark, indelible stamp upon the wretch's face. These startling occurrences had interrupted the business of the court. Squire Templeman at last said :

"There will be no occasion now, I believe, may it please the court, for my testimony. There is a witness in court, I understand, who has just arrived, whose evidence is of great importance."

Mr. Wickham said to the clerk, "Swear Samuel Carter."

Our readers will no doubt recollect the contents of his letter to Isaac Forster. We have further to add, to account for his sudden reappearance, that falling sick, nigh unto death, in Liverpool, Carter had sought the ear of a young American staying at the hotel, and to him confided the facts of his criminality. That confidant was Victor Carrington, just returned from his Highland tour. Though almost paralyzed at the thought of the danger impending over Mr. Allen, and deeply moved at a knowledge of the position in which his beloved Mattie must be placed, he acted with such terrible energy that, ere a day had passed, he was flying over the sea in a specially-chartered, fast-sailing ship, bearing with him the wretched young man, Carter, as the living witness of Mr. Allen's innocence. The vessel arrived safely at Richmond; when, taking horses, the two young men hastened over the mountains to the rescue, fearing every little delay would render it too late to save the innocent and punish the guilty.

They reached Lewisburg only a moment before that sudden appearance in the court room, ignorant, entirely, of the true state of the case.

The statements of Carter it is unnecessary to repeat. From them it was evident that Forster himself had killed Job Terry. The only additional fact which he stated was the pains Forster took to incense him against the peddler on the day before his murder.

The reader will now readily imagine, what was really true, that Isaac Forster had determined to bring Mr. Allen's life into jeopardy, in order, through her fears for her father's life, to obtain the hand of Mattie, and *then*, deceiving her, to cause, if possible, his condemnation and execution. While sitting in



the porch, Forster had heard the peddler, when going away and meeting Mr. Allen in the yard, ask him, in a low voice, to give him notes for specie, which it was inconvenient and attended with more risk to carry in any considerable quantity ; had seen them go together into Mr. Allen's chamber, and heard the peddler, on coming out, address Mr. Allen with, "Much obliged to you, sir;" had there formed his horrible plan—had taken the dirk from the mantelpiece and secreted it. Accident, too, favored his designs, for Mr. Allen's handkerchief had fallen from his pocket, and was picked up by Forster near the yard gate as he departed on his murderous errand.

After Samuel Carter had given his evidence, Mr. Randolph stated that he thought it entirely unnecessary to call any other witnesses, and inquired of the commonwealth's attorney if he intended to argue the case.

"No, sir," said he, "I abandon the prosecution, perfectly satisfied of the innocence of Mr. Allen."

Mr. Randolph made a few eloquent remarks on the extraordinary nature of the case, and concluded by remarking that, in the whole course of his practice, no case had occurred in which the chain of circumstantial evidence against the accused had been so strong as in this ; yet an overruling Providence, to justify the ways of God to man, had demolished and broken to atoms every link at one blow ; had defeated and exposed a deep-laid and desperately dark conspiracy by the most humble and artless means—the attachment of a faithful hound. Let no man hereafter flatter himself that crime can be concealed, or that the criminal can ultimately escape ; and let no man, who is really guiltless, ever despair of honorable acquittal, if he believes and confidently trusts in the providential care of the great Father of light, the Christian's God.

The judge said to the jury, "Are you prepared to render your verdict, or will you retire?"

The jury rose to their feet, and the foreman said :

"We are prepared now, sir. We find Edward Allen *Not Guilty!*"

Mr. Allen was instantly discharged ; the court adjourned, and the hall rung with acclamations. Forster, strongly guarded and attended by Squire Templeman to the door of the prison,

was locked in, and armed men were stationed around the jail. As the judge, the lawyers, Mr. Allen, his son and daughter, Victor Carrington, Miss Templeman, and her father, attended by a numerous party of friends, passed through the crowd to the principal inn of the village, the shouts of the people manifested their joy at the acquittal of the innocent, and the triumph of truth and justice.

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## CHAPTER XVI

## THE END OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS.

AFTER the thrilling excitements of the day, silence and repose rested upon the village of Lewisburg. Night overshadowed the earth. No sounds were heard in the street, and sleep had closed the eyes of all. No, not of all; there was one who slept not. The burning lava of thought overwhelmed his doomed and guilty soul. From him sleep fled affrighted, and repose came not near. In the darkness of the night he could see, as he sat alone in the jail—could distinctly see, the form of him whom he had murdered, standing out from the wall before him. The eyes were glaring upon him in glazed and startling brightness. Grinning, gibbering specters pointed their long and bloody fingers at him, and laughed with horrible, soul-freezing malignity. In vain did he often change his position and look to another side of his cell; still the appalling form was before him. Look where he would, *there—there* it was—the eyes dilated, and fixed upon his with burning intensity. Nearer and nearer they seemed to approach him. In the phrenzied agony of his soul, he arose and paced the room; his knees knocked together, and the big drops of perspiration started from his face. The spectral form descended from the wall and confronted him at every turn. He stopped as if a sudden thought had crossed his mind. He looked up to the low ceiling, then mounted on the stool on which he had been sitting, and groped about with his cold, clammy, trembling hands. He then got down, went to the narrow-barred

window, and seemed to be listening, as if he were apprehensive of being seen or heard. In the morning, when the jailer opened the prison door, he found Isaac Forster a ghastly, stark, and livid corpse, suspended by the neck from the ceiling of the cell. He had, with his teeth and hands, rent his handkerchief into shreds, twisted them into a cord, and, mounted on the stool, had broken a hole through the ceiling, and passed the cord around a joist, from which he had swung himself into eternity. "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way, but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness. When a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead."

An examination of the papers of the guilty suicide disclosed the many artful and monstrous frauds which he had perpetrated, and more still which he intended to commit. The forged will of Mr. Allen, with the places of the date left blank, and the vial of ink to fill the blank, labeled, "*For Allen's will*," was only one among several others. Almost every man whose agent he had been, it was now ascertained, had suffered from his perfidy and cunningly-contrived frauds; and it was most remarkable, that not one of these was so much benefited by the discovery of his evil deeds as the man whom he intended most deeply to injure, and even to destroy—Mr. Edward Allen. The lands which had been collusively sold and reconveyed to Isaac Forster were all recovered. These Mr. Allen transferred to the merchants from whom he derived his title to the lands. So great was their value, that the proceeds of their sale not only relieved Smith and Bird, Buchanan and Alexander from all their embarrassments, but left them in easy circumstances.

The rogues captured suffered the penalty of their crimes. Obed Stapler never ceased to mourn the wretched luck that he had not "knocked off" with his last drove of horses, when he "could have moved off to the West and become a respectable man!" He ever regarded himself as the victim of unpropitious circumstances.

Swinton was a desperado to the last. His remarkable tact

and strength enabled him to escape from jail and to push his way down the Kanawha for Kentucky ; but, the remains of a man found drowned below the falls, having shackles on one leg, proved that life for him was closed—that his wild soul had gone upon the untried realities of the judgment of a higher Court than man's.

Simpson, the liquor-dealer, had been very kind to those left in charge of the New Hope property after Mr. Allen's arrest. The consciousness of his bad calling came over him to his own good, and he was only too glad to avail himself of Mr. Allen's offer of a piece of land, which he cultivated with success, while his children grew up to respectability.

Samuel Carter lived upon New Hope as overseer and director, for many years, a faithful agent and perfectly responsible man. He never ceased to be the most vigilant and uncompromising enemy of intemperance in all its forms.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### A LIFTING OF THE SCENES.

"Touch us gently, Time !" It is a sweet and pathetic plea, oh, so often made, but oh, so often made in vain.

New Hope indeed was favored. The trials of a year brought forth the blessings of many years. Mr. Allen recovered his old elasticity of spirits, and seemed to have become the strong man of forty instead of the worn out man of sixty. Around him were such associations as could but make him "renew his youth."

A splendid mansion soon sprung up from a commanding site on New Hope, from which the vision could for miles stretch away over that magnificent valley in which the river lay like a great silver thread tying the east and the west together. Upon a superb site, not two miles away, stood forth another stately building with an observatory, from which to view the valley beneath. In the first dwelt Mr. Allen and his daughter—now no longer maiden, but matron, the wife of

Victor Carrington and the mother of his two fine children, Edward Allen Carrington and Helen Templeman Carrington. The mother was grown into grace and beauty by her womanly development, and if once winning, was now become truly superb in her loveliness. She was the veritable queen of beauty in the Kanawha.

In the other building dwelt Harry Allen and his Helen, now his wife and the mother of two fair boys and one girl—all "pictures of their mother." They were named Victor, Edward and Mattie—the first called "the Captain," in honor of his grandpa Templeman, whose silver locks now graced the head of the family table at the new homestead.

Among these moved old Uncle Tom—one of the happiest of aged servants, whose greatest delight was to "tend to de young chicks." And the "young chicks" found in him a brave, intelligent and watchful guardian whom they all loved with true heartiness. The old man had one unfailing theme with which to command the attention of the little folks—that of the "awful days ob de great sorrow." He seemed to live as much in the past as in the present, and many an hour did the good old soul spend away in the quiet haunts of the estate "just to tink ober t'ings," as he said. Massa Ben Bramble was, in his mind, one of those great land-marks, which light men on to heaven. The grave of poor Ben found no more sacred worshiper than the old slave.

Let us lift the scene one October day—the sixth anniversary of the deliverance from prison.

On the grass, at the New Hope mansion, lies the little Victor, rolling over and over with Kate, the old hound, who has found in him her third master. It was a joyous scene, but they had it all to themselves; for the child's mother had wandered away down to an inclosure near the river's side, within which arose a pure white marble column, twelve feet in height. Others soon joined her there, and ere long, all the family were circled around the spot, including the family of Harry. Then Mr. Allen said: "Let us give thanks to God for his goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men." Every attendant knelt, while out on the sward gathered "the help," who also knelt in silence. Then there went up to the throne of grace a touching prayer of faith and thanksgiving, such as could

only come from hearts of those born to honor and truth. It was ended ; fair flowers were thrown in upon the mound within, and each eye held a tear for the one buried there. As the circle breaks away in respectful silence, we steal up to the 'nclosure to read on the base of the shaft, while the hound crouches whining at our feet :

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MONOWANO.

THE BRETHREN OF THE COAST.

KING BARNABY.

THE FOREST SPY

THE FAR WEST

THE RIFLEMEN OF THE MIAMI

ALICIA NEWCOMBE.

THE HUNTER'S CABIN

THE BLOCK HOUSE; OR, THE WRONG MAN

THE ALLENS.

ESTHER; OR, THE OREGON TRAIL.

RUTH MARGERIE; OR THE REVOLT OF 168

OONOMOO, THE HURON.

THE GOLD HUNTERS.

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GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS.

